DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 279 272 HE 020 107

TITLE	The Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education. Supplement Number 3: Disabled Student Access to Postsecondary Education. Report and Recommendations of the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission.
INSTITUTION	Florida State Postsecondary Education Commission, Tallahassee.
PUB DATE	20 Feb 86
NOTE	75p.; For the main report and other supplements, see HE 020 104-106.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC03 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	*Accessibility (for Disabled); Access to Education; *College Planning; College Students; *Disabilities; Federal Programs; Hearing Impairments; Learning Disabilities; *Master Plans; Physical Mobility; *Postsecondary Education; Public Policy; *State Programs; Statewide Planning; Visual Impairments
IDENTIFIERS	*Florida

ABSTRACT

This third supplement to the Florida master plan for postsecondary education considers resources and barriers to education for disabled students and offers 21 recommendations. To provide a foundation to discuss the needs of disabled students, characteristics of the following major functional impairments are described: hearing impairment, learning disabilities, visual impairment, and mobility impairment. A statistical overview based on available national and state data is included that describes disabled individuals in both educational institutions and the general population. Attention is directed to policies, programs, attitudes, and architectural features that either help or hinder disabled students. In addition to federal legislation and Florida legislation, the following programs are discussed: the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program; the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services; Division of Blind Services, Department of Education; Division of Vocational Education, Department of Education; Division of Public Schools, Department of Education; Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System; Supplemental Security Income program; and Social Security Disability Insurance. (SW)

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DISABLED STUDENT ACCESS TO POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

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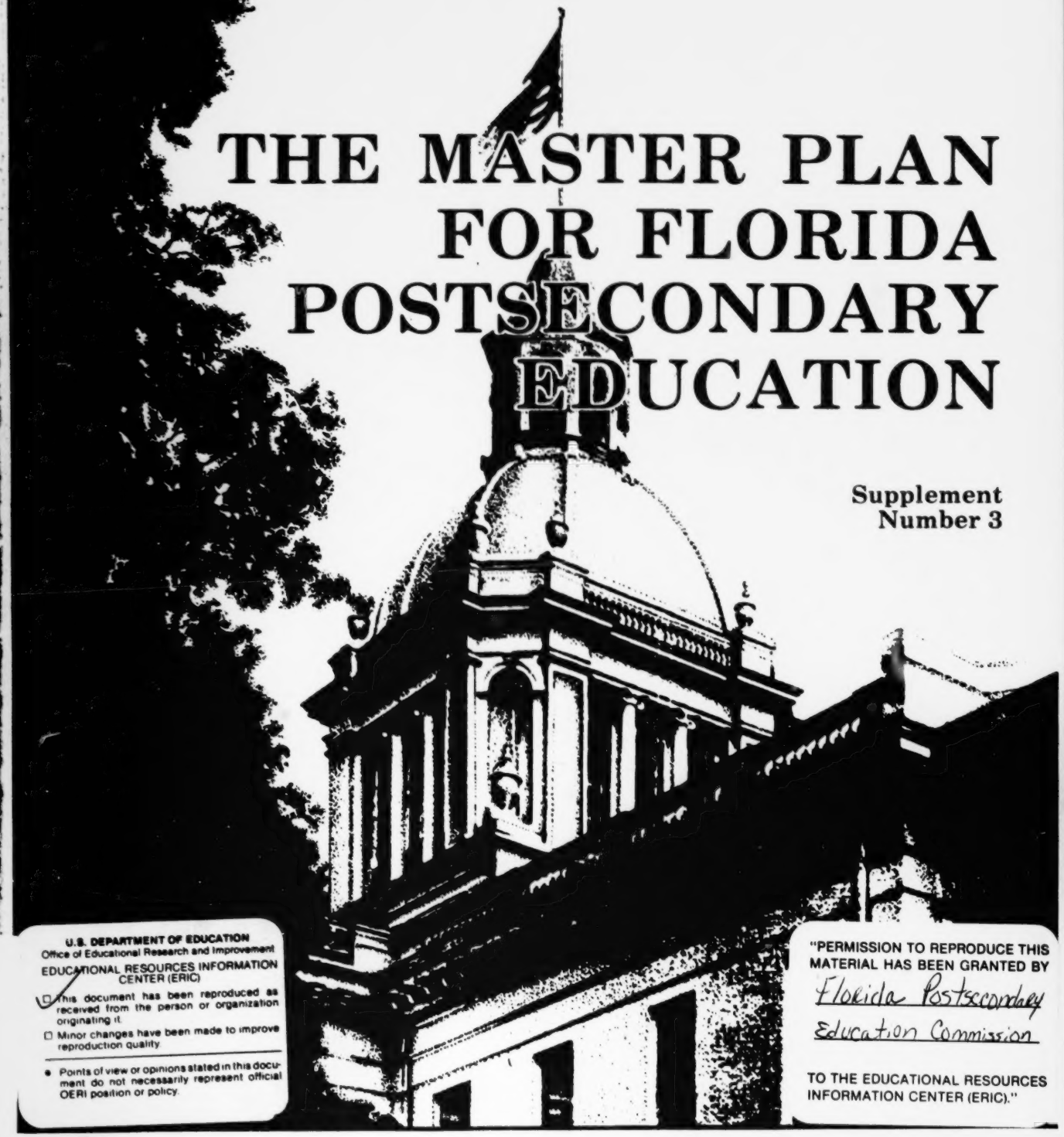
THE MASTER PLAN FOR FLORIDA POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Supplement Number 3



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Report and Recommendations of the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission

HE 020 107

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The Postsecondary Education Planning Commission, initially created by executive order in 1980 and subsequently given statutory authority, serves as an advisory body to the State Board of Education on all postsecondary education matters. The Commission is composed of 11 members of the general public and one full-time student registered at a postsecondary education institution in Florida. Members are appointed by the Governor with the approval of three members of the State Board of Education and subject to confirmation by the Senate.

The major responsibility of the Commission is preparing and updating every five years a master plan for postsecondary education. The enabling legislation directed that the Plan "shall include consideration of the promotion of quality, fundamental educational goals, programmatic access, needs for remedial education, regional and state economic development, demographic patterns, student demand for programs, needs of particular subgroups of the population, implementation of innovative educational techniques and technology, and the requirements of the labor market. The capacity of existing programs, in both public and independent institutions, to respond to identified needs shall be evaluated and a plan shall be developed to respond efficiently to unmet needs."

Other responsibilities include recommending to the State Board of Education program contracts with independent institutions; advising the State Board regarding the need for and location of new programs and branch campuses of public postsecondary education institutions; reviewing public postsecondary education budget requests for compliance with the State Master Plan; recommending to the Commissioner of Education proposals for support through the Postsecondary Cooperation Trust Fund; and periodically evaluating the State's 28 regional coordinating councils for vocational education, adult general education and community instructional services.

Further information about the Commission, its publications, meetings and other activities may be obtained from the Commission office, 304 Knott Building, Department of Education, Tallahassee, Florida, 32301; telephone (904) 488-7894.

THE MASTER PLAN
FOR FLORIDA
POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

Supplement Number 3

Disabled Student Access to Postsecondary Education

Report and Recommendations
of the
Postsecondary Education Planning Commission

February 20, 1986

Knott Building
Tallahassee, Florida 32301

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In recent years, policy makers in Florida have become increasingly responsive to the needs of disabled students. Florida is one of only a few states in the nation with a state equity law addressing the educational rights of protected classes. Provisions in Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes, mirror the federal requirement found in Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act which ensures access to postsecondary education for visually, hearing, and mobility impaired citizens. In addition, Florida is one of a limited number of states which has provided resources for disabled postsecondary students from general revenue funds. In a state that has demonstrated its commitment to disabled students, efforts must continue to maintain ethical and legal responsiveness to their postsecondary educational needs. For this reason, the Florida Legislature requested the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission to submit a Master Plan Supplement outlining current and future postsecondary education needs of the State's disabled students.

In proviso language in the 1985 General Appropriations Act (Chapter 85-119, Laws of Florida), the Legislature called on the Commission to develop "a supplement to the Master Plan on the participation of disabled students in Florida postsecondary education." The Commission Chairman designated a Committee in July, 1985 with the dual responsibility for the Health Professions Study and the Master Plan Supplement on Disabled Student Access. The Committee met in July, August, September, and November. In addition to a literature review, public testimony, and interviews with professionals in the area of disabled students, a survey was distributed to over 500 students, faculty and administrators in colleges, universities and vocational centers to obtain additional insight into campus needs and issues. A public hearing was held in January in Tallahassee, and presentations on the preliminary recommendations were made at meetings involving school district, community college and university personnel, and other individuals concerned with the needs of disabled students to obtain additional feedback on the Supplement. The document was approved by the Commission at its February 1986 meeting.

Based on its review and analysis and the testimony received, the Commission offers the following recommendations designed to encourage access of disabled students to postsecondary education in Florida:

1. Available state resources should be allocated based on the functional needs of the student rather than the type of disability. The Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges should develop common functional definitions for institutional reporting of data on disabled students comparable to those used by the Division of Public Schools and the Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education. The definitions should be general in nature, such as mobility, visual, hearing, speech, or learning disabilities. These categories should be reviewed by the Department of Education's Equal Opportunity Office to ensure the appropriate inclusion of all disability definitions.

2. In instances where out-of-state disabled students are sponsored by a vocational rehabilitation agency in their home state, the resources available through that agency should be exhausted before the student is provided services from Florida resources.

3. The Florida Center for Educational Statistics, created by the 1985 Legislature, should encourage the collection of comparable information on disabled students to permit continuous monitoring of the state's progress in meeting needs in this area. Among the data collected should be the age groupings of disabled students.

4. The Commissioner of Education should appoint a task force to examine the effect of such policies as statewide standardized tests and Rule 6A-10.30, FAC, on disabled postsecondary students. Existing and developing data bases on current disabled student performance should be used by the group. Alternate measures should be developed where appropriate, as well as standardization of alternative testing procedures. Representation on the task force should include representatives from Florida postsecondary institutions who provide services for disabled students as well as specialists in the postsecondary learning needs of students with hearing, visual, learning and mobility impairments.

5. The State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Regents should encourage postsecondary institutions with identified transportation needs for disabled and other students to explore the possibility of developing a joint-use agreement with one or more school districts, as provided in Section 234.211, Florida Statutes.

6. Florida postsecondary institutions should develop awareness activities to inform Florida's citizens about specialized resources designed to assist disabled persons.

7. Postsecondary applicants with Florida special high school diplomas should not be automatically denied admission to postsecondary institutions. Institutions should consider their applications on an individual basis.

8. As information systems begin to use common definitions, retention rates of disabled students should be included as an identifiable item in retention studies for all students.

9. The successful placement of disabled students in meaningful employment must continue to be sought by all postsecondary institutions. The non-punitive placement policy for disabled vocational students established by the 1985 Legislature should be maintained for at least one year and closely monitored. The fact that program administrators have both the responsibility and incentive to place such individuals should be clearly communicated by officials at the state level.

10. Universities, community colleges, and vocational technical centers should designate a minimum of one employee to provide a single point of contact for coordination of programs and services for disabled students. This individual should have academic preparation and experience in the needs of postsecondary disabled students or be given such training on an inservice basis.

11. Placement of vocational rehabilitation, blind services, and other counselors on campus should be encouraged by postsecondary institutions as a way to develop closer coordination with these resources.

12. To assure continued cooperation and coordination in the delivery of services, each institution should consider the establishment of a task force comprised of representatives from the various resources available for disabled students such as Blind Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Student Financial Aid, TRIO, and Centers for Independent Living.

13. Postsecondary institutions should consider the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System as a potential source of information on testing and diagnostic services, curricular modifications, adaptive equipment, and inservice training resource personnel and activities.

14. While mainstreaming is the primary goal for the delivery of educational services to disabled students, the establishment of selected centers of excellence for specific disabilities is supportable. The designation and establishment of such centers should be subject to review and approval by the state level governing or coordinating body responsible for the sector involved. The review should take into account the need for the center, the location of the center, existing resources and additional support required.

15. A position with responsibility for Postsecondary Disabled Student Programming should be designated or created in the Department of Education. This position should be filled by a person with academic preparation and experience in the policy issues, legal requirements and learning needs of postsecondary disabled students. Responsibilities of this analyst would include determining the effect on disabled students of proposed state policies, providing technical assistance to institutions in the training of staff and provision of services, and providing support for the administration of the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program.

16. The Florida Center for Career Development Services should expand its CHOICES computerized counseling component to include information which clearly describes financial aid and other resources available to postsecondary disabled students. All CHOICES terminals should be accessible to such students. In addition, the System should collaborate with the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students and the postsecondary sector boards on the identification of specific institutional and other local programs, services and equipment designed for disabled students. This information should also be maintained in CHOICES.

17. The Auxiliary Learning Aids program is designed to respond to the individual needs of disabled students while maintaining the flexibility of institutional coordinators to manage available resources as efficiently as possible. Rather than a major restructuring of this current funding approach, emphasis should be placed on assuring the provision of the necessary aids and accommodations in a timely and equitable manner.

18. The present policy requiring reversion of unexpended auxiliary learning aid funds on June 30 should be revised to permit institutions to carry forward encumbered funds for an additional three months.

19. The $4500 annual cap per student should be raised to accommodate increases in costs of services since the cap was established in 1979. Specific expenditures should continue to be subject to approval by the Department of Education. To prevent erosion of the number of students served, the

appropriation for this program should be increased based on an estimate of the number of students requiring support in excess of the current $4500 cap.

20. To promote institutional support for the needs of disabled students, institutions requesting reimbursement under the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program should be required to provide matching funds of at least 20 percent. Eligible expenditures should include compensation for personnel who are dedicated completely to the provision of services for disabled students.

21. Stronger links in serving disabled students should be encouraged between business and postsecondary education and among educational institutions through such resources as the Postsecondary Cooperation Trust Fund, the Community College Academic Improvement Trust Fund, community college staff and program development funds, State University System EA/EO funds, and the Federal Vocational Education funds designated under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524).

The completion of this Master Plan Supplement by the Commission is an indication of Florida's commitment to the postsecondary education needs of disabled students. It is hoped that the principles and policies outlined in this document will assist the State in continuing its leadership role in the provision of quality postsecondary education for all Floridians who wish to pursue such opportunities.

MASTER PLAN SUPPLEMENT
ON
DISABLED STUDENT ACCESS

I. INTRODUCTION

> The world which people have constructed is made by and for the able-bodied and the able-minded: for those who can climb stairs, turn doorknobs and faucets, see where they are going, hear noises and voices, commit instructions and information quickly to memory. Educational programs reflect the values of that world.
> Adapted from Access For Handicapped Students to Higher Education: A Reference Handbook. 1981. U.S. Department of Education.

Disabled students have been involved in higher education for many years. Students in wheelchairs were assisted by their friends, and blind students learned to participate in classroom instruction through a variety of inventive methods. These students were, however, the exceptional ones who possessed personal resources which enabled them to access higher education. The vast majority of disabled students never considered higher education, nor were they viewed by the academic world as an appropriate student population.

During the decade between 1970 and 1980, disabled student participation in postsecondary education increased throughout the country for a variety of reasons. Rehabilitation counselors began to encourage more clients to continue their education beyond high school. A significant number of disabled Vietnam veterans began to choose postsecondary education. New research revealed information about the learning needs of some disabled populations. Advocacy groups emerged proclaiming the rights and needs of disabled students, and as a result, federal legislation was enacted which for the first time included protection of these rights.

More than a decade beyond this important legislation, educational policy makers are assessing disabled student participation in postsecondary education to determine the progress of their successful inclusion in the total student population in Florida. Both the executive and legislative branches of the government have joined educational professionals in recognizing the legal and moral responsibility of these efforts.

In response to recommendations from the Second Annual Conference on Higher Education for the Handicapped, the 1980 Florida Legislature authorized the Department of Education to use funds for the development of a "Master Plan for Providing a Uniform Coordinated Delivery System for Handicapped Students Attending Public Community Colleges and State Universities." Among the conclusions of that study were the following:

- efforts to provide special services for disabled students have not reached all disabled students and have reached others inadequately . . .
- staff resources for services to disabled students are significantly lacking . . .
- inadequate institutional funding exists for services to disabled students . . .

- insufficient in-service training is provided for faculty and staff on the needs of disabled postsecondary students . . .

- equal but separate education of disabled students has been found to be unconstitutional; some students, however, may benefit from socialization with others who share their disability . . .

- a need exists for the standardization of position qualification requirements and position descriptions for campus personnel responsible for providing services to disabled students . . .

- campus administrators responsible for provision of services to disabled students must have direct line communication with institutional policy makers . . .

The 1981 Needs Assessment and Master Action Plan for Coordinated Delivery of Services to Postsecondary Education Disabled Students presented a comprehensive report of existing services for disabled students in Florida's public community colleges and universities, as well as specific recommendations for action. No follow-up authority was designated, however, to address these issues. Some needs identified remain unmet, and the Commission believes it necessary to address these and other issues which have surfaced in the subsequent years. The Commission also finds it essential to include all postsecondary disabled students in its Master Plan Supplement.

In January 1983, the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission submitted the first Master Plan for Florida Postsecondary Education to the members of the State Board of Education. The Plan was based on the anticipated needs of Florida's citizens for postsecondary education through the year 2000. As part of that Plan, the Commission made the following recommendations regarding the needs of Florida's postsecondary disabled students:

- The Auxiliary Aids program providing special state appropriations to institutions for the disabled should be continued.

- Institutions should seek out support or assistance from local organizations with interest in or which provide services to the disabled.

- The Department of Education should compile a list of the programs and services offered by postsecondary education institutions in the State and this material should be shared with high school counselors and community organizations for the disabled.

- The Department of Education should see that accurate and complete data on the number of disabled students in postsecondary education institutions are maintained.

- Institutions should review their policies and programs to ensure that the institutions provide suitable architectural and programmatic accessibility.

The Commission also maintained that a more comprehensive description of the issues surrounding the participation of disabled students in postsecondary education should be developed as a supplement to the Master Plan.

In 1984, the Commission submitted a supplement to the Plan entitled "Enhancing the Participation of Minority and Disadvantaged Students in Postsecondary Education." This document focused on the needs of racial and other minorities, and it led to the development of a number of legislative initiatives, including the creation of the College Prep Program. The joint legislative/PEPC study group which investigated this topic determined that the needs of disabled students should be addressed in a separate supplement.

In proviso language in the 1985 General Appropriations Act (Chapter 85-119, Laws of Florida), the Legislature called on the Commission to develop a "supplement to the Master Plan on the participation of disabled students in Florida postsecondary education." The Commission Chairman designated a Committee in July, 1985 with the dual responsibility for the Health Professions Study and the Master Plan Supplement on Disabled Student Access. The Committee met in July, August, September, and November. In addition to a literature review, public testimony, and interviews with professionals in the area of disabled students, a survey was distributed to over 500 students, faculty and administrators in colleges, universities and vocational centers to obtain additional insight into campus needs and issues. A public hearing was held in January in Tallahassee, and presentations on the preliminary recommendations were made at meetings of school district, community college, university, and other representatives concerned with the needs of disabled students to obtain additional feedback on the Supplement. The document was approved by the Commission at its February, 1986 meeting.

The Commission is indebted to the American Council on Higher Education and the Handicapped Resource Center for provision of materials for use in the development of the Master Plan Supplement. Technical information about the various disabilities, particularly in relation to the learning needs of postsecondary students, has been summarized from publications furnished by HEATH.

The Commission appreciates the untiring assistance provided by staff members from the Department of Education, the Board of Regents, and the State Board of Community Colleges. Additional assistance was provided by the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services' Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. Institutional administrators from postsecondary institutions throughout the State provided technical assistance during the development of the Supplement. Sincere appreciation is expressed to the disabled postsecondary students in Florida without whose candor the Supplement could not have been written.

The pages which follow outline information and actions which should be considered by the State Board of Education, the Legislature, institutional representatives and other Florida leaders to assure the access of disabled students to postsecondary education in Florida.

II. DISABILITIES AND POSTSECONDARY EDUCATION

To provide a foundation for consideration of the needs of disabled students, the following is a description of characteristics of the major areas of functional impairment. A statistical overview based on available national and state data is included which describes disabled individuals in both educational institutions and the general population.

MAJOR FUNCTIONAL DISABILITY AREAS

Hearing Impairment

It is important that policy makers and administrators understand the significance of a hearing impairment for a student entering postsecondary education. Decisions must be made concerning the setting of their education, the establishment of appropriate standards, and the provision of necessary support services. While interest in the education of hearing impaired students is not new, the most significant growth in programs occurred during the 1970's in response to new interest and resources from the federal government. During the 1980's, growth of new programming has slowed markedly. It is necessary to examine state and local policies and practices to determine their effect on hearing impaired students, as recent research has shown that hearing impaired students have unique educational needs.

According to a study conducted at Gallaudet Research Institute, the average reading level of a fifteen year old deaf student who has been receiving support services is approximately the third grade. Twenty-five percent of 17 and 18 year old hearing impaired students perform above the eighth grade level, with ten percent above the ninth grade level. Math computation for these students is slightly higher, with twenty-five percent of teenagers performing beyond the ninth grade level. This research further indicated that a correlation exists between the success of a deaf student and the level of mediated experiences.

The University of Arkansas recently completed a $600,000 research project for the US Department of Education's National Institute of Handicapped Research. Preliminary results revealed that most learning impaired students who enter baccalaureate programs leave with associate degrees or certificates. All institutions involved in the study provided interpreters and other support services to these students. However, the researchers identified lack of on-campus housing as a factor which might contribute to the difference between those pursuing a degree and actual recipients. A number of other variables such as student background and ability as well as level of support services provided are now being analyzed the role they play. The study is to be completed by Fall, 1986.

In recent years, educational opportunities for postsecondary deaf students have expanded. In Fall, 1982, 4,586 students were reported to be enrolled in 102 programs for deaf students in postsecondary institutions throughout the nation. Florida had the third highest number with three programs reported to the Center for Assessment and Demographic Studies in the Gallaudet Research Institute in Washington.

Three types of environments provide postsecondary education for hearing impaired students: totally separate institutions such as the federally-supported

Gallaudet College in Washington, D.C. and the National Technical Institute for the Deaf (NTID) in Rochester, New York; a special program for deaf students on the campus of an existing institution for hearing students; and a mainstreamed program in a setting with mostly hearing students. Some believe that hearing impaired students should be educated in a setting in which they have maximum interaction with hearing students to replicate the real world in which they will live and work. Others, however, express the concern that mainstreaming hearing impaired students makes them less aware of the opportunities and services available to them. Furthermore, their interaction with hearing students, with whom they cannot compete in reading comprehension and frequently math, perpetuates low self-esteem and the belief that they are less able than their innate ability. Additional concerns are related to the expense of educating hearing impaired students and the necessity of appropriate faculty training.

Loss of hearing is a complex disability which is difficult to define. Approximately 18 million Americans were reported to be hearing impaired in 1984. The age of the onset of hearing loss is an important consideration in providing services for hearing impaired postsecondary students. In addition, age at loss of hearing has been shown to affect the development of reading skills. No correlation, however, has been shown with level of math achievement.

Loss of hearing means a lifelong communication problem with difficulty in basic language development through speaking and listening means. It is therefore necessary for educators to recognize these important distinctions when providing services for hearing impaired students. When hearing impaired students enter postsecondary education, they have developed a communication skill in one of several methods and students must be provided access to education through their learned means. Three identified approaches to communication are oral, manual, and total.

Since most hearing impaired students enter postsecondary education with the same concerns and aspirations of hearing students, a significant factor in determining their success is the availability and quality of support services provided them. Services frequently provided are interpreters, notetakers, tutors, remedial programs, and technological devices.

An interpreter is a communicator using a mode of communication which has been designated by the hearing impaired student. This person is a facilitator between the student and others, but the interpreter does not enter the communication itself. Often it is difficult to obtain interpreters with the appropriate standard of proficiency. Although difficult, it is extremely important to match an interpreter's knowledge and competence with that of the student. The Registry of Interpreters for the Deaf has developed a certification process which can assist in identifying qualified individuals.

Good notetaking assistance in the classroom is as important to a hearing impaired student as a good interpreter. It provides the student with a permanent record of the class content, while enabling the student to concentrate on the interpreter for immediate information. Some students employ trained notetakers, while others ask a classmate to share notes. In any event, instructors should periodically monitor the work of these notetakers to assure it is accurate and comprehensive. In some cases, hearing impaired students rely on a tutor who knows the subject matter and is experienced in teaching the content to hearing impaired students.

Remedial English language instruction may be necessary for some hearing impaired students, as their range of reading and writing ability varies greatly. Many campuses have established learning centers for students needing this assistance.

Recent technological advances in communications equipment have assisted hearing impaired persons. Hearing aids, personal FM amplification units, television decoders, telephone decoders and other signaling devices have given them increased control over their own environment. Postsecondary faculty and other personnel must become accustomed to the use of these devices, as they may be necessary for communication with hearing impaired students. Faculty and staff training have proved useful in efforts to provide access for these students.

In 1982-83, 16.3 percent of hearing impaired children and youth experienced the disability because of rubella measles in their mothers during pregnancy. This disease was the leading known cause of congenital deafness, although 39.5 percent of the disabilities had unknown causes. Most students experiencing hearing loss as a result of what has become known as the "rubella bubble" were born between 1964 and 1965 as a result of a rubella epidemic. Extensive use of a subsequent vaccination for the disease has nearly eliminated prenatal rubella as a major cause of hearing loss. It is expected that this factor and the decrease in the proportion of youth in the general population will result in a slow decline in the numbers of hearing impaired students entering secondary education and ultimately postsecondary education.

Learning Disabilities

Unlike the disabled person who relies upon a visible means of assistance, a learning disabled person is not recognized by casual observation. No interpreter is present using sign language, no use of braille is necessary, and no technical device is needed. A learning disability is commonly referred to as a "hidden disability." Unknown to an observer, learning disabled persons must cope differently in living and learning situations because of difficulty in processing information. They are described as persons "receiving inaccurate information through their senses and/or having trouble processing that information." It is now recognized that learning disabled persons have the potential for learning and performing, but because of their problems with perceiving information, their learning modes and methods of expression are different and they gather and process information in unique ways.

Difficulty in processing information frequently affects a learning disabled student's performance. While the student is able to think clearly and even logically, the difficulty becomes evident when the student is unable to write a sentence or a paragraph. While reading and writing have become the accepted media of higher education, learning disabled students often rely on speaking and listening to communicate their thoughts and acquired knowledge. Accepted measurement of achievement can be inappropriate and even discriminatory when applied to this group of students.

An additional barrier for learning disabled students in higher education is related to the psychological difficulties which result from repeated failures experienced in early years of schooling. Low self esteem and inability to relate inter-personally are common. In addition, stresses related to years of trying to cover up their disability often result in personal feelings of

anxiety, inadequacy and frustration. It should be noted that this reaction can be found in individuals with any "invisible" disability.

A learning disabled person is neither retarded nor developmentally disabled. (Under federal law, developmental disability is a condition arising before the age of 22 which impairs three or more major life functions, 42 USC Section 6,000, et. seq.) Most agree that learning disabled persons have a perceptual disability present at birth or early childhood which is related to causes other than impairment of vision, hearing, mobility, mental retardation, emotional disturbance, or environmental disadvantage. Learning disabled students generally have normal or above normal intelligence. It is believed that this high level of intelligence is a factor which enables many to develop extraordinary coping mechanisms for hiding or overcoming their disability.

The American Council on Education reports a steady increase in the percent of learning disabled students in postsecondary education since statistics were first gathered in 1978. In 1983, ten percent of disabled freshmen reported a learning disability. Several factors have contributed to the increase in learning disabled student participation: improved identification of children who are learning disabled at the primary level; provision of appropriate special education in elementary and secondary education; arrival at "college age" of students receiving the necessary support services; and increasing awareness in postsecondary institutions that providing necessary support services for such students may enable them to succeed in some aspect of postsecondary education. A significant factor in their increased participation is the success of other learning disabled students who have begun to precede them. Role models can be an important motivating factor for all other disability areas as well.

A variety of options for learning disabled students is offered in American colleges and universities. Programs typically offered can be placed into one of three categories:

Pre-college year or semester - a program offered either on a college campus or in a high school which emphasizes diagnosis of individual strengths and learning styles, teaching of study skills and individual counseling.

College or university programs for learning disabled students - a program requiring separate admission where emphasis is on individual counseling, academic advising and diagnosis. A learning disability specialist usually coordinates the program, and often non-credit courses are offered which teach social skills and disability management. Most students are enrolled in college-credit courses as well.

Regular campus program - the admission of learning disabled students into the regular college program, while providing the same support services and/or tutoring available to all students. Through an Office for Disabled Student Services, students can receive appropriate auxiliary aids and assistance in arranging with instructors for certain classroom modifications, such as use of tape recorders and time extensions on examinations. Students who are most likely to succeed in this kind of setting are those who are accustomed to managing their disability, are assertive about their learning needs and are highly motivated to succeed.

When postsecondary learning disabled students expect to receive auxiliary aids and adaptations, verification of the disability is usually required. Most campuses have designated an office or administrator to receive documentation of the disability from a professional such as a neurologist or educational counselor.

Services and adaptations needed by learning disabled students are as individualized as the students themselves. Dr. Loring Brinckerhoff of the University of Wisconsin suggested the following possible accommodations:

- Modifying or substituting foreign language or mathematics course requirements
- Allowing part-time enrollment instead of full-time study without affecting financial aid status
- Permitting examinations to be proctored, read orally, dictated or typed
- Allowing the proctor to clarify examination questions
- Allowing extra time to complete examinations
- Increasing the frequency of exams or quizzes
- Changing the test format
- Permitting calculators and dictionaries for use during exams

Visual Impairment

Visually impaired students are those who depend on non-visual means of learning. A visual impairment may be caused by a physical diminution or loss of vision or inability to perceive what is viewed through the eye. A student with this impairment may not see or comprehend written material. Visual perceptual problems may include inability to discriminate figure/ground, sequencing and letter reversals, and similar shaped letters. Students may be unable to complete a standard answer sheet or write an essay in the usual manner. Visually impaired students frequently experience great difficulty in computation and other mathematical curricula because conceptualization of numbers and figures is dependent upon visual recognition and interpretation.

Instructors can greatly facilitate the classroom learning of visually impaired students in a variety of ways. It is essential to describe in words that which they point out or demonstrate for visual students. Usually visually impaired students will need to handle items of demonstration for tactile interpretation. Audible switches and signals are important, and equipment must be stationary or its relocation made known to students.

Adaptations for visually impaired students have been successful in making it possible for visually impaired students to achieve in the academic arena. Their scores on standardized tests typically are comparable to those of sighted students. Additionally, some faculty members have devised methods of making course content accessible to these students. An instructor in one Florida

postsecondary institution developed tactile slides and recorded descriptions for use by his visually impaired biology students.

The following are examples of adaptations which can be used to provide access for visually impaired students:

- Allow student to use tape recorders or notetakers during classroom lecture and discussion
- Allow time for students to obtain brailled editions of textbooks
- Arrange for special editions of course material and exams, i.e. on tape, individually read, large print or braille
- Allow use of electronic optical aids which enlarge the print or non-optical aids like reading machines which change the form of print to be usable for people with visual impairments
- Allow students to record exam answers by typing or taping
- Allow students to dictate exam answers to a proctor who marks the answer sheet or writes the essay
- Where spelling and punctuation are related to course objectives, student and instructor may determine a way for grammar to be evaluated within the parameters of the adaptation

Mobility Impairment

A disability which limits functions of moving in any of the limbs or fine mobility is described as a mobility impairment. Impairments of this nature may involve limitations in accomplishing such activities as reaching and entering classrooms, sitting for extended periods of time, manipulating test materials like scratch paper or pencils, writing and marking small answer ovals, or writing, computing, and transferring numbers to paper.

As a result of Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, many campus buildings and classrooms have been made accessible to students with mobility impairments. Some instances exist, however, in which physical facilities remain inaccessible. For example, several Florida institutions have located student services such as registration and financial aid on the second floor of buildings with no elevators.

Faculty members must work individually with physically impaired students to ensure the accessibility of their classrooms and to provide sufficient time for the student to move about the room. It may be necessary to arrange for proctors to assist students with manipulation of test materials, marking exams and writing numbers and/or symbols as directed by the students. In some cases, alternative methods of recording written material such as typing or taping may be necessary as well.

Simple devices can facilitate the learning of mobility impaired students. Folders, clamps and rubber mats can prevent objects from moving. Equipment can be modified and larger typewriter and computer keyboards are available for those

with unsteady movements. Reachers, mouthpieces and head wands are also appropriate for use by some students with limited mobility of their limbs or bodies.

STATISTICAL OVERVIEW

Increasing numbers of disabled students are reported in postsecondary institutions throughout the nation. See Table 1. These numbers are expected to continue to increase as a result of early identification of disabled children and the provision of services for them in elementary and secondary education. An additional group of disabled students expected to grow is in the adult population. According to Frank Bowe's analysis of 1980 census data, 25 percent of working-aged disabled persons are between the ages of 25 and 55. As postsecondary institutions expand their outreach to adults, this population of disabled adults should become an increasing percentage of college students.

At present, no coordinated system for determining the numbers of disabled students in Florida's postsecondary institutions exists. Common definitions are not used by the State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Regents. Each sector does, however, collect some data on the numbers of disabled students enrolled. The State Board of Community Colleges reported that in 1983-84, 3917 full-time disabled students were enrolled. In addition, 3711 part-time students were reported. No common definitions were used by the twenty-eight colleges in reporting the information. The Board of Regents report does use common definitions, and in Fall 1983-84, 1,134 disabled students were reported. See Table 2. However, these definitions are of a categorical nature and consequently include a number of individuals who may have no need for accommodations. For example, a diabetic in most cases should not require special assistance. At the same time the reported figures probably do not include all disabled individuals due to the reluctance of some to self-identify. Vocational Education represents a primary choice for disabled students at both the secondary and postsecondary level. The Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education reported 7,183 full-time equivalent disabled students enrolled in 1983-84, including 2,840 at the postsecondary level. See Table 3.

A source of information which has relevance in determining the current needs of disabled students in Florida postsecondary education is the Division of Public Schools' Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students. The Bureau's 1985 Annual Report provides information about the increasing number of disabled students being provided services in elementary and secondary education. See Table 4. With an increase in participation by students and expanding programs at the secondary level, it is expected that an increase will occur in the number of students exiting secondary education who could benefit from postsecondary education. At the request of the Commission, the Bureau has collected information on these exit patterns. Based on responses received to date, in Spring, 1985, 1099 disabled students received regular high school diplomas from public high schools in 37 Florida school districts. See Table 5.

In addition to traditional-aged students, a significant number of disabled persons are represented in the population who are in need of postsecondary education. The 1980 census revealed information about Florida's disabled working-aged population (ages 16-64 years). See Tables 6 and 7. Of working-aged Floridians, 9.9 percent report at least one disability, a rate

TABLE 1

DISABLED STUDENT ENROLLMENT IN COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

	Fall, 1978	Fall, 1983	Fall, 1984
Percent of disabled students in freshman population	2.7%	6.9%	7.3%

Source: Astin, A., Green, K., Korn, W. & Maier, M.J. (1978-1984). The American Freshman.

TABLE 2

STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF FLORIDA
ENROLLMENT OF DISABLED STUDENTS BY CATEGORY
ACADEMIC YEAR 1983-84 (FALL)

Impairment/Disability	Fall
Visual Impairment	230
Orthopedic Deformity or Functional Impairment (Except Amputation)	247
Mental, Psychoneurotic, or Personality Disorders	16
Neurological Disorders	49
Cardiovascular Disorders	45
Epilepsy	26
Blood Serum Disorders	11
Hearing Impairment	122
Absence or Amputation of Major or Minor Members of the Body	29
Speech Impairment	20
Neuromuscular Disorders	36
Respiratory Disorders	64
Diabetes	49
Drug Abuse	0
Cancer	0
Dyslexia	82
Other	249
Number of Students with Multiple Disabilities	114
Number of Disabled Students	1,134
Total Headcount Enrollment	144,060
Disabled Student Percentage	.78%

Source: State University System

TABLE 3

DISABLED STUDENT FTE ENROLLMENT
IN JOB PREPARATORY VOCATIONAL EDUCATION BY LEVEL
FY 1983-84

Disability	Secondary	PostSecondary	Community College*
Educable Mentally Retarded	1,031	355	
Trainable Mentally Retarded	134	81	
Physically Handicapped	65	450	
Physical/Occupational Therapy Pt	2	20	
Speech/Hearing Therapy Pt	240	32	
Deaf	62	82	
Visually Handicapped Pt	18	5	
Visually Handicapped	5	25	
Emotionally Disturbed Pt	198	66	
Emotionally Disturbed	114	319	
Specific Learning Disability Pt	1,040	33	
Specific Learning Disability	1,289	55	
Hospital/Homebound Pt	101	0	
Profoundly Handicapped	14	93	
TOTAL	4,313	1,616	1,224
Total Enrollment	105,986	124,710	84,552
Disabled Student Percentage	4%	1.3%	1.4%

*Disabled students enrolled in community colleges are not reported by disability code.

Source: Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education

TABLE 4

FLORIDA'S EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT PROGRAM
1983-84

XVII. FLORIDA'S EXCEPTIONAL STUDENT EDUCATION PROGRAMS
10-YEAR GROWTH

	74-75		75-76		76-77		77-78	78-79		79-80		80-81		81-82		82-83		83-84	
	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts	Tchrs	Stdnts
Educable Mentally Handicapped	1,901.1	28,757	1,800.9	28,036	1,838	24,922	23,277	1,752	21,837	1,469	20,362	1,455	19,416	1,205.63	18,066	1,089	17,205	982	16,746
Trainable Mentally Handicapped	471.5	4,753	463.6	4,797	520	5,013	4,853	591	4,885	533	5,003	594	4,923	541.90	5,095	476	5,103	443	5,134
Physically Handicapped	161.5*	2,540*	171.0*	2,736*	161*	2,040*	4,061*	206	2,082	232	2,016	230	2,351	202.78	2,371	201	1,907	176	1,989
Physical & Occupational Therapy					52	1,273		56	2,219	55	2,924	151	4,112	146.81	4,285	157	4,546	151	5,076
Speech, Hear.,Lang.	672.5	46,537	747.8	50,390	757	48,929	53,240	1,000	52,536	1,149	56,111	1,141	60,067	1,274.30	63,812	1,306	67,261	1,344	72,006
Deaf	193.0	1,161	191.0	1,196	223	1,252	1,383	194	1,305	182	1,384	231	1,470	208.80	1,649	228	1,494	239	1,428
Visually Handicapped	84.5	827	90.0	872	106	908	924	124	972	114	1,017	143	1,040	129.48	1,019	137	1,108	136	1,122
Emotionally Handicapped	543.5	8,256	649.6	9,042	823	8,084	9,571	1,157	10,276	1,002	11,522	1,215	13,061	979.03	14,711	994	15,262	851	15,487
Specific Learning Disabilities	1,058	23,252	1,316	29,689	1,626	34,942	40,814	2,502	45,024	2,736	50,599	3,005	54,906	2,360.45	58,582	2,413	60,678	2,253	61,243
Gifted	498.4	24,617	494.9	25,558	627	20,259	22,101	592	23,684	610	27,087	793	30,746	832.05	35,377	888	37,933	1,007	42,537
Hospital/Homebound	225.5	1,916	241.9	1,771	141	1,714	1,818	193	1,691	248	1,723	274	1,651	260.82	1,997	260	1,912	268	1,695
Profoundly Handicapped					67	514	1,132	177	1,465	320	1,742	539	3,289	611.07	3,728	599	4,159	635	4,337
Socially Maladjusted	205	3,781	173.9	3,150	209	2,593	2,430												
Juvenile Shelters	43.5		34																
Varying Exceptionality	280		314		412									1,328.35		1,423		1,587	
Supervisory and Special Teachers	332.7		289.9		294														
Special Services	27.5		24		24														
TOTAL	6,698.2	146,397	7,002.5	157,237	7,880	152,443	165,604	8,544	167,604	8,650	181,490	9,771	197,032	10,081.47	210,692	10,171	218,568	10,072	228,800

*Teachers - Fed. Annual Data Report
2-Students - MIS Exceptional Student Membership Survey

TABLE 5

1984-85 GRADUATES BY AWARD RECEIVED AND EXCEPTIONALITY
(UNDUPLICATED COUNT)
37 OF 67 LOCAL SCHOOL DISTRICTS REPORTING

Exceptionality	Standard Diploma	Special Education Diploma	Certificate of Completion
Physically Handicapped	13	21	0
Speech Therapy	30	15	0
Hearing Therapy	2	1	1
Deaf	12	14	9
Visually Handicapped	11	0	0
Emotionally Disturbed	39	57	2
Specific Learning Disability	1029	168	16
Unspecified Disability	70	73	57
Total	1099	349	85

Source: Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education

TABLE 6

REPRESENTATION OF DISABLED PERSONS OF WORKING AGE (16-64) IN TOTAL POPULATION

Nation	8.5%
Florida	9.9% (9th highest state)
Male Floridians	11.1%
Female Floridians	8.9%
Black Floridians	15.0%
Hispanic Floridians	6.3%

Source: Bowe, Frank. U.S. Census and Disabled Adults. University of Arkansas.

TABLE 7

EMPLOYMENT RATE OF DISABLED FLORIDIANS (16-64 YEARS)

Total: 34.5% (40th in Nation)

	White	Black	Hispanic
Males:	43.0%	39.0%	45.7%
Females:	24.7%	27.5%	23.0%

Source: Bowe, Frank. U.S. Census and Disabled Adults. University of Arkansas.

higher than the national average of 8.5 percent. See Table 8. Labor force participation of working-aged disabled Floridians is 40th in the nation, with 65.5 percent unemployed. The national average of employed working-aged disabled persons is higher at 38.1 percent. See Table 9. While these figures are not intended to be a "performance report" of postsecondary education in Florida, they do reveal a portion of the population for which postsecondary education could be appropriate.

TABLE 8

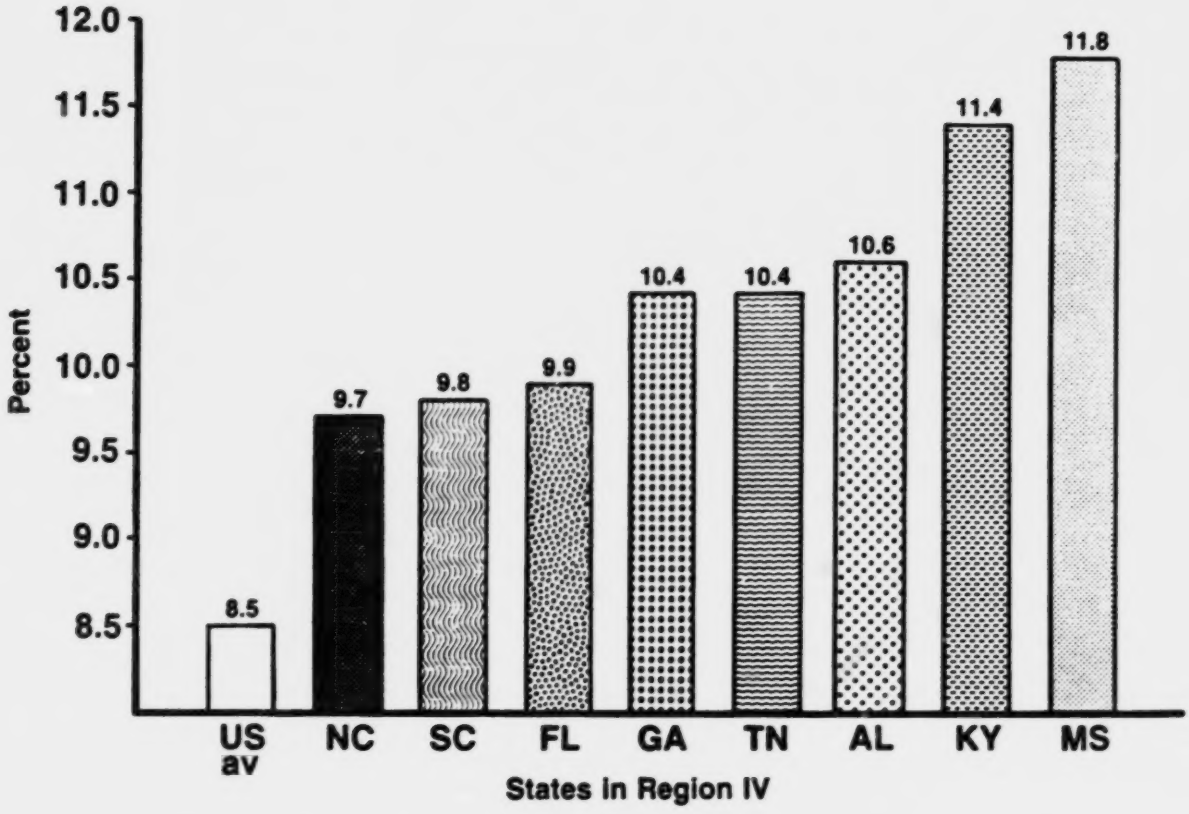

Figure 7. Proportions of working age population reporting one or more disabilities, by State in Region IV. (Source: U.S. Census, 1980.)

Source: Bowe, F. (1984). U.S. Census and Disabled Adults. Hot Springs, AR.: University of Arkansas, Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center.

TABLE 9

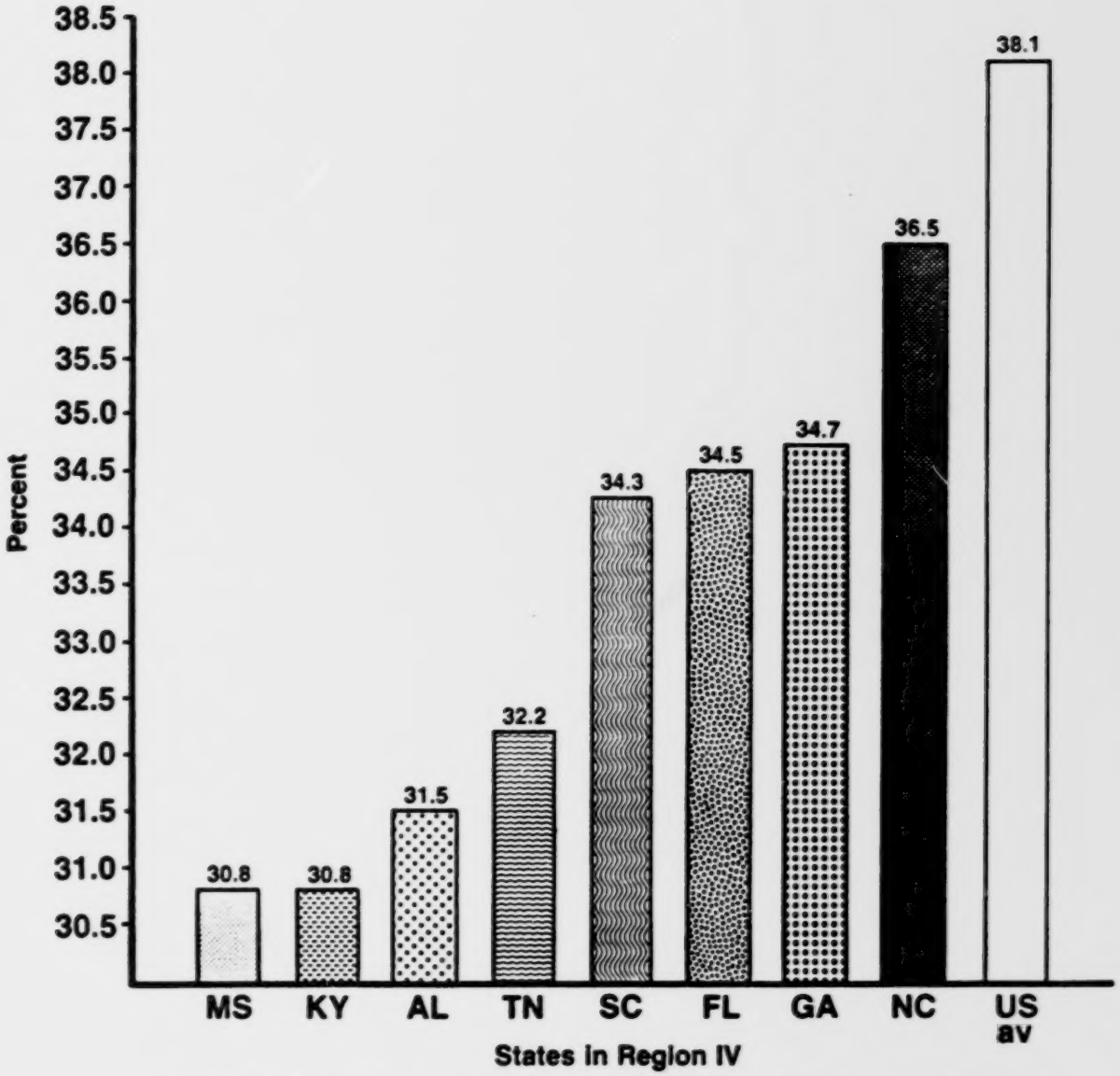

Figure 8. Labor force participation by working age disabled persons, by State in Region IV. (Source: U.S. Census, 1980.)

Source: Bowe, F. (1984). U.S. Census and Disabled Adults. Hot Springs, AR.: University of Arkansas, Arkansas Rehabilitation Research and Training Center.

III. DISABLED STUDENT ACCESS: RESOURCES AND BARRIERS

Disabled individuals seeking access to postsecondary education are faced with a broad array of both resources and barriers. The following sections are policies, programs, attitudes and other aspects of the environment which may serve to help or hinder disabled students.

RESOURCES FOR DISABLED STUDENT ACCESS

Federal Legislation

The Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973 represents a comprehensive federal response to the plight of the nation's disabled citizens. The Act makes significant contributions in four distinct areas. First, in an attempt to promote "comprehensive and continuing State plans . . . for providing vocational rehabilitation services to disabled individuals," the Act provides for federal coordination of and monetary assistance to state vocational rehabilitative programs. Second, the Act encourages novel research on both the state and federal level into the myriad problems experienced by disabled persons. Third, the Act established several new and innovative federal programs, such as a National Center for Deaf-Blind Youth and Adults and federal mortgage insurance for rehabilitation facilities.

The fourth major contribution of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 is embodied in Sections 503 and 504, which together have far-reaching ramifications for large segments of the general public as well as for disabled people. Section 503 provides that every employer doing business with the federal government under a contract for more than $2500 must take affirmative action to recruit, hire and promote qualified disabled individuals and accommodate them in all phases of employment. Section 504 prohibits discrimination on the basis of disability by a postsecondary education program receiving federal funds.

In language closely mirroring provisions in Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, Section 504, which became effective on June 3, 1977, states:

> No otherwise qualified handicapped individual in the United States, as defined in 7 (6) of this title shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or activity receiving Federal financial assistance.

According to this law, the definition of "handicapped person" is any person who 1) has a physical or mental impairment which substantially limits one or more of a person's major life activities, 2) has a record of such impairment, or, 3) is regarded as having such an impairment.

In the context of postsecondary and vocational education services, the federal definition of a "qualified handicapped person" is someone "who meets the academic and technical standards requisite to admission or participation in the recipient's education program or activity." With respect to employment, a qualified handicapped person is one ". . . who, with reasonable accommodation, can perform the essential functions of the job in question."

The regulations clearly prohibit any federally assisted institution, public or private, from barring admission to institutions or programs or employment of disabled persons solely because of their disabilities, or from imposing quotas or giving admissions tests that have "a disproportionate, adverse effect on handicapped persons." Moreover, the regulations bar postsecondary institutions from asking prior to admission whether an applicant has a disability, unless they plan remedial or voluntary action "to overcome the limited participation of disabled persons" in their institutions. In that case, colleges must make it clear to applicants that they are not required to supply such information. After a student is admitted, however, the institution may make confidential inquiry concerning disabilities.

Although all postsecondary facilities need not be changed, they must "as a whole" be made accessible to disabled students, but all buildings constructed after the law went into effect must be "designed and constructed in such a manner that the facility . . . is readily accessible to and usable by disabled persons." Disabled students are also entitled to "convenient and accessible" campus housing at the same cost as provided to other students, and disabled students who are capable of living in campus housing must be offered the same variety and "scope" of rooms offered to non-disabled persons.

Bias against disabled students in counseling, placement, student government and activities, educational programs, physical education, athletics, financial aid, and student employment is also prohibited. Postsecondary institutions must also "adopt grievance procedures that provide for the prompt and equitable resolution of complaints." In addition to the provisions listed above, the regulations impose obligations upon postsecondary programs to provide auxiliary aids to disabled students in order to accommodate disabilities.

Two years after the passage of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, Congress passed the Education for All Handicapped Children Act, also known as Public Law 94-142. In this legislation, specific standards were set to provide for a "free appropriate education" for all disabled children. Each disabled child must be provided with a written Individualized Education Program which describes the school district's plan for an appropriate education for the student. The Act requires mainstreaming disabled children, but in cases where other factors weigh heavily, other arrangements are permitted. Schools must provide "related services" such as transportation, developmental, corrective and supportive services. Speech pathology, audiology, psychological services, physical and occupational therapy, and counseling services are included with limited medical services for diagnostic and evaluation purposes. Following the federal legislation, approximately two thirds of the states' special education statutes made similar provisions. Many post high school disabled individuals have not had the full benefit of PL 94-142. However, this legislation can be expected to have a growing impact on the number of disabled students interested in pursuing studies at the postsecondary level.

Florida Legislation

In an effort to assure equality of access and opportunity within the state system of public education, the 1984 Florida Legislature created Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes, the "Florida Educational Equity Act." The statute and accompanying rules parallel and complement Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

The statute reads that "no person in this state shall, on the basis of race, national origin, sex, handicap, or marital status, be excluded from participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any education program or activity, or in any employment conditions or practices, conducted by a public education institution which receives or benefits from federal or state financial assistance." The statute continues that "educational institutions within the state system of public education shall develop and implement methods and strategies to increase the participation of students of a particular race, national origin, sex, handicap, or marital status in programs and courses in which students of that particular race, national origin, sex, handicap, or marital status have been traditionally underrepresented . . ."

This legislation reinforced the Florida Human Rights Act of 1977 (Section 760.10, F.S.) which prohibits discrimination in the areas of housing, employment, and training.

Auxiliary Learning Aids Program

In 1979, the Florida Legislature appropriated $735,935 to assist public universities and community colleges in meeting the requirements of Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973. The appropriation was in specific response to subsection 104.44(d), Code of Federal Regulations, which requires postsecondary education institutions receiving federal funds to provide disabled students with auxiliary learning aids which are necessary for their participation in educational programs. Auxiliary aids may include taped texts, interpreters or other effective methods of making orally delivered materials available to students with hearing impairments, readers in libraries for students with visual impairments, and other similar services and actions. Funding for the program since its inception is noted in Table 10.

The Postsecondary Education Unit of the Office of Educational Planning, Budgeting, and Evaluation in the Department of Education has responsibility for administering the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program. In accordance with rules adopted by the State Board of Education, auxiliary aid funds are to be awarded to institutions as reimbursement for eligible expenditures made for disabled students. To receive services provided by auxiliary aid funds, students must first exhaust their eligibility for or be found ineligible for other federal or state sources of assistance for program services. Institutional reimbursement may not exceed $4,500 per disabled student in each academic year. Under Rule 6A-10.28, Florida Administrative Code, this limitation of funds eligible for reimbursement by the Auxiliary Aids Program does not negate institutional responsibility for provisions of auxiliary learning aids as required by the Code of Federal Regulations, subsection 104.44 (d). Any additional funds necessary to meet the auxiliary aids needs of disabled students must come from institutional funds or other sources.

Rule 6A-10.28, FAC, further provides that equipment purchased by the institution but reimbursed by the Auxiliary Aids Program shall remain the property of the institution. Proviso language in Chapter 81-206, Laws of Florida, and in subsequent General Appropriation Acts prohibits use of program funds for salaried positions, with the exception of interpreters for the deaf. Hiring of full-time interpreters must have prior approval of the Department of Education.

TABLE 10

APPROPRIATIONS FOR AUXILIARY LEARNING AIDS

Fiscal Year	Appropriation	Participating Institutions	
		Universities	Community Colleges
1979-80	$ 735,935	5	13
1980-81	981,246	9	19
1981-82	1,000,000	9	20
1982-83	1,025,000[1]	9	21
1983-84	978,978	9	23
1984-85	978,978	9	26
1985-86	978,978	9	26

[1] Due to mandatory reserves imposed by the Governor and the Cabinet during fiscal year 1982-83 the allocation was reduced to $978,978.

Source: Florida Office of the Auditor General and Florida Department of Education. Performance Audit of the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program for Postsecondary Handicapped Students, 1985.

At the beginning of each fiscal year, administrators at institutions seeking Auxiliary Learning Aids funds submit projections of their needs for the year. The Department of Education determines those requests which are allowable. If the legislative appropriation is less than the total of all institutional funds requested, each institutional request is reduced proportionately. Since 1981, proviso language in the General Appropriations Act has authorized the Department of Education to provide 20 percent of each institution's approved allocation at the beginning of the year as start-up funds.

Auxiliary Learning Aids Program funds are disbursed to the institutions as reimbursement for those expenses determined allowable by the Department of Education. Mid-way through the year a review is conducted to determine whether institutions are using their allocated funds at a rate such that all funds will be expended by the end of the year. In those instances where all funds will not be exhausted, the Commissioner of Education has been authorized to adjust allocations among institutions. Any unencumbered funds at the end of a fiscal year are reverted to the General Revenue Fund.

The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation, Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services

In 1984-85, 1410 students in Florida postsecondary institutions received $685,604 in vocational rehabilitation funds. See Table 11. Vocational Rehabilitation is a federal-state program for assisting eligible disabled persons to become employable. Education and training at a vocational school, college or university can be a part of the employment objective of individual clients. Vocational Rehabilitation programs are frequently referred to as Voc Rehab or VR. As specified in the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, federal funds comprise 80 percent of vocational rehabilitation costs and the state must provide the remaining 20 percent.

All fifty states participate in vocational rehabilitation programs. In many states there are two agencies providing services, a general agency and one which serves only blind or visually impaired persons. In Florida, the Division of Blind Services (DBS) of the Department of Education receives federal vocational rehabilitation funds to provide services to persons who are blind and visually impaired. A complete description of that agency is provided in the next section of this report. The Office of Vocational Rehabilitation is a program of the Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services which receives federal funds to provide services to all other eligible disabled persons in the State.

To be eligible to receive vocational rehabilitation funds, individuals must experience a disability which is a substantial handicap to employment, and they must have potential for employment as a result of rehabilitation services. Vocational rehabilitation counselors in local agencies determine the suitability of a client's participation in postsecondary education only as it relates to enhancing that individual's job potential. An Individual Written Rehabilitation Plan (IWRP) will include both short and long term goals for the client. Eligible students can be provided certain services so long as they are outlined in the IWRP. The setting for student training can be in colleges, universities, rehabilitation workshops, technical or trade schools, or on-the-job training. Examples of services provided students by the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation are: tuition, books, tools, equipment, supplies, licenses, transportation, interpreters for the deaf, and assistance with living expenses.

TABLE 11
FLORIDA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
1984-85 EXPENDITURES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

SECTOR/INSTITUTIONS	SERVICES					
	TRAINING		OTHER SERVICES[1]		ROW AGGREGATE	
COMMUNITY COLLEGES	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)
Pensacola	210	86,986.63	1	14.50	211	87,001.13
Okaloosa-Walton	36	9,356.02	0	0	36	9,356.02
Chipola	1	692.00	0	0	1	692.00
Tallahassee	23	7,805.34	0	372.00	23	8,177.34
North Florida	0	0	0	0	0	0
Gulf Coast	9	2,581.39	0	0	9	2,581.39
St. Johns River	4	1,464.00	0	0	4	1,464.00
Santa Fe	85	30,802.66	0	0	85	30,802.66
Lake-Sumter	NO	DATA	NO	DATA	NO	DATA
Lake City	22	9,438.99	0	0	22	9,438.99
Central Florida	16	3,870.00	0	0	16	3,870.00
Florida J.C. at Jacksonville	119	22,836.57	1	71.41	120	22,907.98
Daytona Beach	40	12,954.14	0	0	0	12,954.14
St. Petersburg	177	107,050.98	2	118.85	179	107,169.83
Pasco-Hernando	1	171.00	0	0	1	171.00
Hillsborough	9	2,424.34	0	0	9	2,424.34
Manatee	53	24,417.22	1	234.00	54	24,651.22
Valencia	36	21,955.60	0	0	36	21,955.60
Brevard	77	34,185.28	0	0	77	34,185.28
Seminole	10	3,981.86	0	0	10	3,981.86
Polk	32	12,423.37	1	113.01	33	12,536.38
Edison	14	5,091.71	0	0	14	5,091.71
South Florida	3	174.70	0	0	3	174.70
Indian River	9	1,704.67	0	0	9	1,704.67
Palm Beach	3	1,055.64	0	0	3	1,055.64
Broward	53	20,412.25	0	0	53	20,412.25
Miami Dade	79	28,530.35	0	0	79	29,530.35
Florida Keys	3	1,313.65	0	58.40	3	1,372.05
COMMUNITY COLLEGE SUBTOTALS	1,114	453,680.36	6	982.17	1,120	454,662.53

TABLE 11 (continued)
FLORIDA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
1984-85 EXPENDITURES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

SECTOR/INSTITUTIONS	SERVICES					
	TRAINING		OTHER SERVICES[1]		ROW AGGREGATE	
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)
University of West Florida	18	14,784.32	1	2,730.55	19	17,514.87
Florida A & M University	8	3,252.30	0	0	8	3,252.30
Florida State University	29	15,710.37	0	0	29	15,710.37
University of Florida	65	46,596.23	0	0	65	46,596.23
University of North Florida	8	6,019.38	0	0	8	6,019.38
University of South Florida	37	33,086.94	0	0	37	33,086.94
University of Central Florida	18	9,932.24	0	0	18	9,932.24
Florida Atlantic University	4	1,386.80	0	0	4	1,386.80
Florida International Univ.	48	19,731.12	0	0	48	19,731.12
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM SUBTOTALS	235	150,499.70	1	2,730.55	236	153,230.25

TABLE 11 (continued)
FLORIDA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
1984-85 EXPENDITURES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

SECTOR/INSTITUTIONS	SERVICES					
	TRAINING		OTHER SERVICES[1]		ROW AGGREGATE	
FLORIDA INDEPENDENTS	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)
Stetson University	0	1,251.22	0	0	0	1,251.22
Florida College	3	1,034.24	0	0	3	1,034.24
University of Tam ı	NO	DATA	NO	DATA	NO	DATA
Florida Institute of Technology	2	395.00	0	0	2	395.00
Rollins College [3]	1	696.00	0	0	1	696.00
Barry College	2	3,702.21	0	0	2	3,702.21
Other Private Colleges	0	171.29	0	0	0	171.29
University of Miami	4	15,664.60	0	0	4	15,664.60
Florida Southern College [3]	2	1,142.49	0	0	2	1,142.49
FLORIDA INDEPENDENT SUBTOTALS	14	24,057.05	0	0	14	24,057.05

TABLE 11 (continued)
FLORIDA VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
1984-85 EXPENDITURES FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

SECTOR/INSTITUTIONS	SERVICES					
	TRAINING		OTHER SERVICES[1]		ROW AGGREGATE	
OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTIONS	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)	# OF CLIENTS[2]	EXPEND.($)
National Training Institution for the Deaf	7	11,212.67	0	0	7	11,212.67
Gallaudet University	32	42,283.88	1	125.00	33	42,408.88
Delgado Junior College	0	32.76	0	0	0	32.76
OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTIONS SUBTOTALS	39	53,529.31	1	125.00	40	53,654.31
SUMMARY						
COMMUNITY COLLEGES	1,114	453,680.36	6	982.17	1,120	454,662.53
STATE UNIVERSITY SYSTEM	235	150,499.70	1	2,730.55	236	153,230.25
FLORIDA INDEPENDENTS	14	24,057.05	0	0	14	24,057.05
OUT-OF-STATE INSTITUTIONS	39	53,529.31	1	125.00	40	53,654.31
GRAND TOTALS	1,402	681,766.42	8	3,837.72	1,410	685,604.14

NOTES: 1. Other Services include readers, interpreters, tools, equipment, transportation and other services required to achieve occupational goal.
2. Numbe Of Clients totals included quarter-by-quarter duplicated headcounts.
3. Missing data from one to three quarters

SOURCE: Florida Department of Health and Rehabilitative Services

Division of Blind Services, Department of Education

The Division of Blind Services (DBS) is an administrative unit of the Florida Department of Education in the office of the Deputy Commissioner for Special Programs. It consists of four program areas: vocational rehabilitation, medical and social services, vending facilities, and the Florida Regional Library for the Blind and Physically Handicapped.

The DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Program has been given the responsibility in this State for the vocational rehabilitation of persons who are blind or who are threatened with blindness. Services are provided to assist blind and visually impaired persons in reaching their potential for personal and economic independence. See Table 12 for the distribution of vocational rehabilitation funds by type.

The DBS Vocational Rehabilitation Program is jointly funded by the federal and state governments on an 80/20 basis. See Table 13. According to the DBS, in recent years uncertainty has arisen about allocation of federal funds, and inflation has reduced the purchasing power of existing funds.

As determined by the 1973 Rehabilitation Act, to be eligible for services a person must have a physical or mental disability which constitutes a substantial handicap in obtaining, retaining or preparing for employment, and there must be a strong likelihood that these rehabilitation services would improve the client's prospects of employment. The specific disability criterion used by the DBS is legal blindness or bilateral vision impairment which may result in legal blindness within five years. When an individual is determined eligible, a DBS counselor develops an Individualized Written Rehabilitation Program (IWRP) which outlines a plan for the client. It is this plan which frequently includes an educational component for preparation for employment. The appropriate educational setting may be in a public college or university, a vocational school, a private institution, or on rare occasions, an out-of-state institution. The plan includes the client's vocational goal, the services which will be needed to reach that goal, and the anticipated length of time necessary to meet the goal.

Federal regulations specify the types of services which may be offered to clients. The State does have latitude, however, in assuming responsibility for determining the exact circumstances for appropriate services. DBS policy is to make available to eligible clients the full range of services outlined in the regulations, provided that documentation in the IWRP shows the services to be necessary for achievement of a specific vocational objective or for extended evaluation of rehabilitation potential. The following are available client services:

(a) evaluation of rehabilitation potential

(b) counseling, guidance and referral

(c)* physical and mental restoration

(d) vocational and other training

TABLE 12
DIVISION OF BLIND SERVICES
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION PROGRAM STATISTICS
BY FISCAL YEAR

	1980	1981	1982	1983
Clients served	9,233	8,279	7,310	6,476
Referrals	3,762	3,582	3,344	2,777
Accepted for Services	788	729	675	755
Rehabilitations	575	591	679	605
Not Rehabilitated	213	202	212	228
Year End Referrals	1,873	1,909	1,718	1,193
Year End Active Cases	2,164	2,060	1,821	1,802

Source: Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services, Biennial Report, 1981-82 and 1982-83.

TABLE 13

Division of Blind Services
Administrative Payments for Fiscal Year 82-83

	GENERAL REVENUE	FEDERAL	OTHER	TOTAL
Salaries	$1,608,903	$3,159,665	$ 39,205	$4,807,773
Other Personal Services	8,567	29,452	20,675	58,694
Expenses	429,447	677,232	38,276	1,144,955
Operating Capital Outlay	2,089	21,273	33,337	56,699
Food		38,670		38,670
Data Processing	23,193	52,656		75,849
Fixed Capital Outlay	47,788		49,710	97,498
Lump Sum - Retirement Vending stand	285,796			285,796
Grants			209,430	209,430
Equipment & Supplies		430,486	250,463	680,949
TOTAL	$2,405,783	$4,409,434	$641,096	$7,456,313

Source: Florida Department of Education, Division of Blind Services, Biennial Report, 1981-82 and 1982-83.

(e)* maintenance

(f)* transportation

(g)* services to members of a disabled individual's family necessary to the rehabilitation of the disabled individual

(h) interpreter services for the deaf

(i) reader services, rehabilitation teaching services, and orientation and mobility services for the blind

(j)* books and supplies for training

(k)* telecommunications, sensory, and other technological aids and devices

(l) recruitment and training services to provide new employment opportunities in rehabilitation, health, welfare, public safety, law enforcement, and other appropriate public service employment.

(m) placement in suitable employment

(n)* post-employment services necessary to assist disabled individuals to maintain suitable employment

(o)* occupational licenses, tools, equipment, and initial stocks (including livestock) and supplies, and

(p)* other goods and services which can reasonably be expected to benefit a disabled individual in terms of employability.

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*Indicates economic need must be considered.

All DBS sponsored training must be part of the client's IWRP and is not subject to determination of a client's economic need. The length of the training should be adequate to prepare the client to compete for employment in the specific field. Completion of a certificate or diploma is not always necessary. DBS clients can enroll only in those training facilities which are in compliance with Title VI of the Civil Rights Act, Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972, and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973. DBS sponsored vocational training must be in one of the following areas:

(a) personal adjustment training
(b) pre-vocational training
(c) work adjustment training
(d) academic training
(e) mobility training
(f) on-the-job training
(g) work experience
(h) training in the use of special equipment

(i) any other organized training needed to meet the rehabilitation needs of the individual being served.

The Division of Blind Services' Rehabilitation Center for the Blind in Daytona Beach was the first facility established in the United States to assist adult civilians who have experienced a loss of vision. The Center can accommodate 52 clients for a 16 week residential training. The program focus at the Center is acquisition of skills in mobility, braille, typing, independent living, and the use of equipment designed for blind and partially sighted persons. In addition, Center staff provides vocational and psychological testing, medical evaluation, counseling and recreational services. Consultants provide assistance with nutrition and psychological and psychiatric service. Adult basic education for improvement of academic skills is provided.

Division of Vocational Education, Department of Education

The Division of Vocational Education in the Florida Department of Education receives federal funds for use by school districts and community colleges in serving disabled students. Current authority for appropriation and allocation of these funds comes from the recently enacted Carl Perkins Vocational Education Act, P.L. 98-524. Title II(A) of the Act receives 57 percent of Title II funds, and 10 percent of the 57 percent are designated for disabled student services. For 1985-86, that amount is $2,550,800 for services to disabled students, many of whom are enrolled in postsecondary education. See Table 3.

The allocation of federal funds for vocational education disabled students is determined for each institution on the basis of a funding formula established by the federal government. Primary factors in the formula are the number of economically disadvantaged and disabled students in local school districts, colleges, and the Florida School for the Deaf and Blind. A new 1984 federal regulation requires that states provide a 50 percent matching of funds.

School districts and community colleges are eligible to receive funds as entitlements based on the formula described above. Each district or college must submit an application which meets specific vocational criteria:

a) Personnel must be qualified and certified

b) The content of the curriculum must be bona fide vocational education

c) The facility must be adequate to do what is proposed.

The application is reviewed by a local council comprised of representatives from vocational education, vocational rehabilitation, and exceptional education. The application is then reviewed by the State Council for Education and Rehabilitation of the Handicapped which is comprised of similar representation at the state level. Funds are awarded for provision of services to individuals who are mentally retarded, hard of hearing, deaf, speech or language impaired, visually disabled, seriously emotionally disturbed, orthopedically impaired, otherwise impaired by health, and persons with specific learning disabilities who because of their disability cannot succeed in the regular vocational education program without special education.

Local districts and community colleges are required to provide the following services to disabled students:

a) An assessment of the interest, abilities, and special needs of that student with respect to completing successfully the vocational education program

b) Special services, including adaptation of curriculum, instruction, equipment, and facilities designed to meet the student's special needs

c) Guidance, counseling, and career development activities conducted by professionally trained counselors

d) Counseling services designed to facilitate the transition from school to post-school employment and career opportunities.

Additional services which can be provided include personnel in the form of aides, support services, materials, supplies and equipment.

Division of Public Schools, Department of Education

Transition Programs

Recent studies have shown that large numbers of students with disabilities have left public secondary schools without marketable skills for securing employment. When faced with unemployment or under-employment, many become dependent on society for provision of their basic needs. The result is significant loss of human potential, as well as economic drain. The issues of self-image and self-esteem of disabled persons provide additional complications.

In an attempt to assist disabled persons, the US Department of Education awarded six million dollars in Fall, 1984, to secondary schools, rehabilitation agencies, vocational programs, community colleges and other educational institutions for the development of "transition" programs. Designed to serve as bridges between public school transition programs provide further skills to enable students to become "job ready." One component of these programs is determining the appropriateness of postsecondary education for some disabled students to help them become more employable.

In Florida, many school districts are offering transition programs in cooperation with the State Job Service, Vocational Rehabilitation, Private Industry Councils, public and private employees and other local resources. The Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students has appointed an internal task force to incorporate the transition concept into current activities. Centers for Independent Living represent a key resource available to assist in the transition process. In Florida, such centers are located in Tallahassee, Pensacola, Orlando, Gainesville, Tampa, Miami and Satellite Beach and are part of a national network of programs designed to provide specific services, information and referral, and advocacy support to persons with disabilities. Funded primarily through the Rehabilitation Act of 1978 and its amendments, the centers in Florida have devoted considerable efforts toward increasing the independence of persons with disabilities, and reducing the architectural and attitudinal barriers that prevent their access to and full participation in society. Examples of specific services provided by the centers related to

postsecondary education include transportation, classroom space for on-site instruction and advocacy to assure accessibility of educational facilities and programs for disabled individuals.

Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS)

The Florida Diagnostic and Learning Resources System (FDLRS) provides diagnostic and instructional support services to district exceptional student education programs statewide. Functions of the Associate Centers include student identification and evaluation, in-service training, media/materials, and information/consultation. Services are available to district, community agency, and other personnel working with exceptional students, as well as parents. Eighteen associate centers are currently in operation in Florida. In addition, ten specialized Centers provide multidisciplinary evaluation, media/material service, preservice on inservice training, and information/ consultation services. Four of the Centers are on university campuses. See Tables 14 and 15.

Sources of Financial Assistance for Disabled Students

Disabled students are encouraged to apply for all regular sources of student financial aid. The Division of Blind Services requires students to apply for a Pell Grant before they can receive further assistance. In Florida, no state-supported special scholarship programs have been implemented for disabled students. A variety of private foundations and organizations have interest in disabled students and on occasion provide scholarship funds. This source of assistance is, however, insufficient to be a consideration in reducing the financial impact of postsecondary education on disabled students.

Supplemental Security Income (SSI) is a federal program to provide financial assistance to disabled persons who have limited income and resources. The amount of payment depends on the financial status of the students and their families.

A second federal program is Social Security Disability Insurance (SSDI). This program allows eligible disabled students to receive monthly case benefits from their own Social Security Trust Fund if the student has worked, or the student may qualify under a parent's Social Security if the parent has filed or is deceased.

The Student Financial Aid data base which is presently being incorporated into the Florida Department of Education CHOICES Computerized Counseling System can be used to collect information about institutional sources of financial aid designated solely for disabled students. One example of such assistance is the Disabled Student Scholarship Fund currently in the planning stages at Florida Junior College at Jacksonville. These funds will assist students who are not sponsored by the Division of Blind Services or the Office of Vocational Rehabilitation. In addition, they will be used for tuition for essential skills taught in non-college credit programs such as Independent Living for Adult Blind.

TABLE 14

FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC AND LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM
SPECIALIZED CENTER CONTACT LIST

Clearinghouse/Information Center
Florida Department of Education
Tallahassee, FL

Communications Systems Evaluation Center (CSEC)
Orlando, FL

Florida Instructional Materials Center for the Visually Handicapped (FIMC)
Tampa, FL

Educational Television and Captioning Center for the Hearing Impaired
Florida School for the Deaf and Blind
St. Augustine, FL

FSDB Outreach Project
Child Study Center
Florida School for the Deaf and Blind
St. Augustine, FL

FDLRS/FSU-Regional Evaluation and Consulting Center
Florida State University
Tallahassee, FL

FDLRS/USF-Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Evaluation Services
University of South Florida
Tampa, FL

FDLRS/UF-Multidisciplinary Diagnostic and Training Program
JHM Health Center
University of Florida
Gainesville, FL

FDLRS/Mailman-Multidisciplinary Evaluation Services
University of Miami
Miami, FL

FDLRS/TECH
Merritt Island, FL

TABLE 15

FLORIDA DIAGNOSTIC AND
LEARNING RESOURCES SYSTEM

Source: Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students, Division of Public Schools, Florida Department of Education.

BARRIERS TO ACCESS FOR DISABLED STUDENTS

Historically, American colleges and universities have attempted to make education available to those willing and able to meet academic requirements. Disabled persons have the same needs and goals as non-disabled students, including the need to select and prepare for vocations and avocations of their choice; to engage in work that is satisfying; to upgrade their skills and advance their careers. Disabled students are confronted by numerous barriers which circumvent the fulfillment of these needs. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 specifies that institutions shall remove physical and attitudinal barriers to disabled students' participation in postsecondary education and shall provide aids and make recommendations that neutralize the effects of disabling conditions.

Attitudes

In addition to architectural barrier removal and program accommodation, changes in attitudes must also be effected. Society in general has many misconceptions, biases, and fears regarding disabled persons and as a result imposes restrictions on this group. Attitudinal barriers can include misguided compassion and lower expectations for disabled students. Frequently, disabled students are capable of functioning and achieving at a higher level than that perceived by faculty, administrators and other students.

In many cases, faculty and administrators need information regarding the learning needs of students with specific disabilities. In addition, they must be informed about campus resources available for assistance to both students and faculty. It has been shown that faculty attitudes toward disabled students frequently improve when they are provided adequate information about their students and how to teach them appropriately.

One negative component of attitudes toward disabled persons in society is reflected through the use of adjectives as nouns. Frequently disabled persons are grouped by references such as "the deaf" or "the blind." These groupings refer to disabled persons as though they are all alike, with no individuality. It has been shown that references which leave out such words as "people" or "persons" are dehumanizing and tend to set disabled persons apart in such a way as to perpetuate discrimination.

Architecture

The term "architectural barriers" refers to features found in the environment that prohibit people with disabilities from independent use of buildings or other types of facilities. For a person who is disabled, particularly for one with an orthopedic impairment, interaction with the physical environment can be most critical. Physical barriers may be obvious such as stairs and curbs, or they may be less visible but equally prohibitive such as the pressure of a door or the glare from a poorly placed window.

In educational institutions, the following elements must be examined and made accessible for all students on campus: entrances and ramps, doors, stairs, restrooms, curbs, elevators, corridors and walkways, landscaping, and campus transportation. Key elements must be considered when assessing the physical environment for barriers. For example, the width, shape, and approach

configuration of doorways and hallways must be studied. Also to be examined are movement along routes of travel, negotiating changes in level, transferring from one body posture to another, searching for direction-finding information, interpreting information displays, negotiating a series of movements in a confined space, negotiating human and vehicular traffic, use of fixtures and work surfaces, and avoiding hazards in the path of access.

Disabled students are entitled to comparable, convenient, and accessible housing, at the same cost as other students enjoy. It is not necessary that all dormitory rooms be accessible, but federal law prohibits housing all disabled persons in a separate section of a particular dormitory or in a single, segregated dormitory.

A barrier-free architectural environment is one in which campus elements have been removed, eliminated or avoided if they constitute obstacles preventing disabled students from enjoying the full and free use of that environment. The goal is to provide a campus environment in which disabled students have the option to participate fully and to interact totally with all services and resources in the campus community.

Programs

Section 504 of the 1973 Rehabilitation Act requires that institutions provide program accessibility to disabled students by offering all programs and services in accessible facilities. Program accessibility can be achieved by a variety of methods, such as relocating classes to accessible facilities, offering services in alternate locations, and modifying buildings. The program accessibility requirement also means that disabled students must be enabled to participate as fully as possible in laboratory work and field study and to benefit from library services, athletic programs and resident life, all of which may necessitate modification of facilities.

Section 504 clearly prohibits institutions from limiting or restricting student choice of an academic major or career field. The regulations specify that institutions must make whatever accommodations may be required to enable a qualified disabled student to participate in an academic program. Accommodations could entail adapting the way a course is taught or permitting a student to make substitutions for specific course requirements. Institutions must also provide alternative methods of examining disabled students where a need for such methods is indicated. The requirement to make accommodations has two exceptions. Academic requirements that can be demonstrated to be essential to the program of instruction or directly related to licensing requirements are not regarded as discriminatory.

IV. ISSUES AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The following is a discussion of issues which the Commission has identified as pertinent to the enhancement of access to postsecondary education for Florida's disabled citizens. Recommendations have been made concerning determination of students to be served, determination of services to be provided, and funding of services.

DETERMINATION OF STUDENTS TO BE SERVED

Definitions and Categories

Attempts to "categorize" disabled students with common definitions have proved difficult. Many categorical definitions do exist, but typically these definitions are highly technical and require detailed information about students. They may be useful when medical descriptions and categories are needed by the institution for documentation of a student's disability. Use of these categories for educational purposes, however, has resulted in inaccurate classification of some students, and frequently students are classified in the "other" category because of insufficient information to list them appropriately.

For purposes of common reporting at the state level, it is necessary to use functional definitions rather than categorical ones. A functional definition is based on the needs of an individual student for support services rather than the classification of the disability. For example, a student with cerebral palsy would be classified under this heading in a categorical system. The need for support services by cerebral palsy students is highly individualized, depending on how the disease is manifest in that student. Some cerebral palsy students would need no service. It would be impossible to determine the resources needed in a categorical system, while a functional system would identify students actually needing support services, for example those with a mobility impairment. This system should provide a means of reporting students with temporary disabilities who need support services as well.

Recommendation:

1. Available state resources should be allocated based on the functional needs of the student rather than the type of disability. The Board of Regents and the State Board of Community Colleges should develop common functional definitions for institutional reporting of data on disabled students comparable to those used by the Division of Public Schools and the Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education. The definitions should be general in nature, such as mobility, visual, hearing, speech, or learning disabilities. These categories should be reviewed by the Department of Education's Equal Opportunity Office to ensure the appropriate inclusion of all disability definitions.

Out-Of-State Students

Concern has arisen over state resources being provided to assist out-of-state disabled students enrolled in public postsecondary institutions in Florida. At present, no historical information is available showing the number of these students or the amount of funds being expended. Beginning in 1985-86, the Board

of Regents is able to identify the residency status of disabled students enrolled in a state university. One university with a major program serving disabled students responded that of 879 disabled students enrolled, 67 were non-Florida residents. Of these, 10 received state funded special services. While these numbers appear small, it is expected that factors such as Florida's climate and terrain will attract increasing numbers of students from outside the State. It is not the intent of the Commission to deny access to these disabled students, but it is important that resources from their states of residence be used prior to providing limited Florida resources.

Recommendation:

2. In instances where out-of-state disabled students are sponsored by a vocational rehabilitation agency in their home state, the resources available through that agency should be exhausted before the student is provided services from Florida resources.

Data Collection

Data collection on disabled students will continue to be difficult and less than 100 percent accurate. Postsecondary institutions are prohibited by law from requiring students to report a disability prior to admission. The usual procedure for determining numbers of enrolled disabled students is during the registration process when an optional form can be completed by the student identifying the disability and the support services needed. Some students who report a disability, however, need no support services to participate in campus academic activities. When available at the point of entry sharing of this information with the office of disabled student services or other appropriate contact may permit true to work with faculty on the development of any required accommodations.

At present no coordinated data collection on disabled postsecondary students in Florida exists. Information collected by the Board of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges, and the Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education is based on three different sets of reporting categories. No information exists about the ages of disabled students to determine which populations are underserved. Even among institutions within some sectors, definitions of disability categories are inconsistent. Until information is collected in a uniform manner, policymakers will be reluctant to provide necessary resources to assist postsecondary institutions and disabled students in meeting the learning needs of disabled citizens.

The 1985 Legislature created the Florida Center for Educational Statistics (Chapter 85-196, Laws of Florida) which is to serve as the official source for information used to support educational planning, budgeting and evaluation decisions of the Governor, the State Board of Education, the Department of Education and others. Among the duties assigned to the Center are the identification of data elements to be maintained and the development of standardized terminology and definitions for the statistics which are compiled. The Center represents a significant resource for assuring greater consistency and comparability.

Recommendation:

3. The Florida Center for Educational Statistics, created by the 1985 Legislature, should encourage the collection of comparable information on disabled students to permit continuous monitoring of the State's progress in meeting needs in this area. Among the data collected should be the age groupings of disabled students.

DETERMINATION OF SERVICES TO BE PROVIDED

Reasonable Accommodation

As a result of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act, the term "reasonable accommodation" has become a description of what the law has stated postsecondary institutions must provide disabled students. It encompasses a variety of activities which are provided by many different components of an institution. All of these accommodations are for the single purpose of assisting disabled students in accessing education on an equal basis with non-disabled students. Disabled students are as diverse as any student group, and it is important to view any assistance as it relates to specific needs of individual disabled students.

Accommodation is applicable to many areas of institutional activity. Physical accommodation relates to the environment, such as curbs, ramps, railings, and heights and widths of certain physical facilities. Also included in physical accommodation are interpreters, readers, notetakers, and electronic equipment. Typically these accommodations are provided by institutional personnel other than faculty members. Instructional accommodation, however, is dependent on faculty involvement. It is a faculty member's responsibility to devise ways of making individual course and classroom content accessible to each student. Because disabilities are individualized, faculty members can best accomplish accommodation by personal consultation and involvement with each disabled student. Frequently all that is necessary is a minor adjustment in teaching method, such as speaking more distinctly or verbally describing print material being used in a visual medium. Some disabled students, however, will need modification of instructional material which requires creativity as well as time. For example, a biology instructor at Valencia Community College converted laboratory slides used in his science class into tactile slides with recorded descriptions for use by visually impaired students. His efforts are a reflection of what is expected for compliance with federal and Florida laws.

Provision of accommodations for disabled students during examinations is an area where both faculty and other institutional personnel can collaborate. The primary purpose of providing accommodations for disabled students when administering tests is to ensure that any examination provides the same measures of the disabled student's mastery of the material as those for non-disabled students. Occasionally all that is necessary is to administer the test in a different setting, as in having it read aloud for a blind student or offering it on audio tape. Other accommodations, however, may involve alternative means of evaluating learning, as in substituting multiple choice answers for essays and vice versa. It may be necessary to extend the time of examinations for some disabilities.

Whatever the necessary accommodation, federal regulations clearly state that "in its course examinations . . . a recipient . . . shall provide such methods for evaluating the achievement of students who have a handicap that impairs sensory, manual or speaking skills as will best ensure that the results of the evaluation represent the student's achievement in the course, rather than reflecting the student's impaired . . . skills (except where such skills are the factors that the test purports to measure)."

A program accommodation is the modification of an academic program to allow the participation of a disabled student. Federal and state regulations reflect an attempt to respect the authority of academic policy makers to set program standards. The regulations are specific, however, in stating that an institution must be able to demonstrate that academic requirements are essential to the program of instruction. Institutional personnel must take care that in setting standards and requirements their actions cannot be found by the courts to be arbitrary or exclusionary. Length of time necessary to complete a program is a factor in planning postsecondary education for many disabled students. Administrative adjustments may have to be made in conjunction with faculty members to ensure that the student does not assume an unrealistic course load. Problems related to these decisions occur when the student is forced to be part-time and cannot access certain benefits because of that status, such as financial aid awards and participation in campus activities.

In recent years, policy makers have expended considerable time and resources in the development of policies intended to improve the quality of postsecondary education in Florida. Impact studies were conducted to determine the effect on minority students prior to setting the standards for measurement of skills required by these regulations. No such studies were conducted, however, to determine how disabled students might be affected. Concern has arisen about three such policies which could be limiting the access of certain disabled students and for whom accommodation may be necessary: The College-Level Academic Skills Test, Rule 6A-10.30, FAC (the Gordon Rule), and common placement testing.

The College-Level Academic Skills Test: The College-Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST) is intended to measure the level of achievement of the communication and computation skills which is expected of all students by the time they complete their sophomore year in college. Statutory authorization for CLAST is S. 240.239, F.S. and the rules are described in FAC 6A-10.31.

Test administration procedures for disabled students are outlined in Rule 6A-10.311 (4), FAC: According to the rule, any person required to take the CLAST will be deemed to have satisfied the requirement if the test "has not been modified in administration as best to ensure that the performance of the person on the subtest accurately reflects the person's achievement of the skill being measured, rather than the person's impaired abilities." Examples offered for test modifications are flexible scheduling, flexible settings, varied methods of recording test answers, revised formats and use of auditory aids.

Guidelines described in the CLAST Test Administration Manual seek to achieve adaptations of materials and conditions for testing which parallel those adaptations which have been made in the instructional program of each disabled examinee. In the event that testing materials for assessing skills are unavailable because of the student's particular disability, the Department of

Education will certify when such a student with a record of disabilities has met the requirement without a test score.

According to a 1984 report by Educational Testing Services (ETS), a four-year research project revealed that disabled students as a general group perform .5 standard deviations lower than national norms on the SAT and ACT assessments. ETS reported this to be an appreciable difference. Mobility disabled and visually impaired students were shown to have the least difference in test performance, while learning disabled students ranked third and hearing impaired students performed the least well. The report concluded, however, that the lack of data on test performance, reliability and validity prohibited drawing definitive conclusions. The report suggested that further research was necessary before the fairness of, in this case, the admissions testing process for disabled students could be appropriately evaluated.

Common Placement Testing: According to the State Board of Education Rule 6A-10.315, FAC, first-time in-college applicants to public community colleges and universities who intend to enter degree programs must be tested prior to the completion of registration. One or more of four specific tests are permitted for use in the placement testing. If a student's test results do not meet minimum scores adopted by the State Board of Education, the student must be placed in college preparatory instruction. If, in fact, students with some disabilities perform poorly on standardized tests, it is expected that they will not meet the minimum scores. Their placement in a remedial, college preparatory program would likely be inappropriate.

Rule 6A-10.30, FAC (Gordon Rule): Pursuant to s.229.053(2)(d), Florida Statutes, the Florida Administrative Code (Rule 6A-10.31) outlines assessment procedures of student achievement to be measured by completion of coursework in English and mathematics. Prior to receipt of an associate in arts degree from a public community college or entry into the upper division of a public university, a student shall successfully complete twelve semester hours of coursework within the general study area of humanities. The student must produce written work of at least 6,000 words per three hour course. In addition, six semester hours of mathematics coursework at the minimum level of college algebra must be completed.

A serious issue for consideration by the State is the effect this rule could have on the progression of certain disabled students through the postsecondary education system in Florida. For example, persons knowledgeable in the education of hearing impaired and deaf persons have produced extensive research revealing the difficulty these students have in mastering reading and writing skills. Such difficulty is typically a result of their disability rather than their innate ability or level of achievement. It should be stressed that what is sought is not a lowering of standards, but rather an awareness that alternate measures may be used to satisfy the requirements that have been established.

Recommendation:

4. The Commissioner of Education should appoint a task force to examine the effect of such policies as statewide standardized tests and Rule 6A-10.30, FAC, on disabled postsecondary students. Existing and developing data bases on current disabled student performance should be used by the group. Alternate measures should be developed where

appropriate, as well as statewide guidelines for the administration of alternative testing procedures. Representation on the task force should include representatives from Florida postsecondary institutions and other agencies who provide services for disabled students as well as specialists in the postsecondary learning needs of students with hearing, visual, learning and mobility impairments.

Transportation

A significant barrier facing all disabled individuals is the limited availability of transportation services. Florida has taken a leadership role in addressing the needs of disabled persons and other transportation disadvantaged individuals including the elderly and those with low-income.

In the early 1970's, citizens, advocate groups and legislators became concerned about the duplication and fragmentation of transportation services to the transportation disadvantaged in the State. As a result, Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, was enacted by the 1979 Florida Legislature for a five year period. The 1984 Legislature re-enacted the law for an additional five years.

Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, mandates coordination of all transportation disadvantaged services. Estimates reveal over 800 social services agencies within the State which provide or purchase transportation services for their client groups. An estimated $40 million is being spent for these transportation services. According to the Department of Transportation, 910,304 handicapped individuals over 60 and 623,498 under 60 are in need of transportation services. Chapter 427, Florida Statutes, mandates the establishment of coordinated services at the county level and places responsibility for implementing coordinated transportation in the hands of a Coordinating Council for the Transportation Disadvantaged that is appointed by the Governor. This policy-making body is chaired by the Secretary of the Florida Department of Transportation, who has major implementation responsibilities for the legislation. Also represented are the Secretary of Health & Rehabilitative Services, the Commissioner of Education, the Secretary of the Department of Community Affairs, a representative of elderly Floridians, a representative of disabled persons and the presiding President of the Florida Association of Community Action agencies.

One innovative approach encouraged and monitored by the Coordinating Council for meeting the transportation needs of disabled and other persons involves the use of school buses. Since 1981, the Legislature has provided a total of $39.2 million to school districts for school bus replacement, pursuant to Section 236.0835, Florida Statutes. To be eligible for these funds districts must develop an acceptable joint-use program as provided in Section 234.211, Florida Statutes to serve the transportation disadvantaged. This program is administered by the School Transportation Management Section of the Division of Public Schools in the Department of Education. The joint-use programs are subject to approval by the Coordinating Council for the Transportation Disadvantaged. While the Commissioner of Education is authorized to grant waivers from this requirement, 57 of the 67 districts developed approved programs in 1984-85. Of these, 26 provided services for disabled persons. Trip destinations included educational facilities, health care centers, shopping malls, H.R.S. offices, congregate meal sites and locations that met recreational and social needs. Services were provided from a minimum of one day per week

using one bus to seven days each week using 20 buses daily. The buses ranged in size from small van-type school buses to large eighty-eight passenger transit-type buses. Several districts used buses equipped with wheelchair lifts to provide transportation services to non-ambulatory riders.

Examples of services provided to postsecondary disabled students include a lift van at the University of Florida which brings students from the parking areas to the classroom buildings, and a transportation system which carries disabled and other students from a five county area to Chipola Junior College. A total of $900,609 was expended by school districts and community agencies to provide services for the transportation disadvantaged through this program in 1984-85. At present, school districts have an incentive to develop and maintain a joint-use agreement but no mandated level of program or financial participation has been established. Other postsecondary education institutions should be encouraged to make use of this potential resource for meeting the transportation needs of their disabled students.

Recommendation:

5. The State Board of Community Colleges and the Board of Regents should encourage postsecondary institutions with identified transportation needs for disabled and other students to explore the possibility of developing a joint-use agreement with one or more school districts, as provided in Section 234.211, Florida Statutes.

Recruitment, Retention and Placement

It has been shown that many disabled high school graduates in Florida are not enrolling in postsecondary institutions. In many cases, however, these students are in close proximity to institutions which provide excellent support services for disabled students. In addition, disabled adults are in need of training and re-training which can be obtained through postsecondary education. A third group of citizens for whom postsecondary education is available is that of temporarily disabled persons. Addition of these students to campus classrooms and activities is more than a legal and moral obligation, as participation of disabled students can enhance the total campus environment.

Recommendation:

6. Florida postsecondary institutions should develop awareness activities to inform Florida's citizens about specialized resources designed to assist disabled persons.

Two types of high school diplomas are awarded by public secondary institutions in Florida. A regular diploma is awarded to students successfully completing all state and local requirements and who present passing scores on State assessments of achievement. A special diploma is awarded to disabled students who demonstrate mastery of minimum student performance standards required for exceptional students as defined in State Board of Education Rule 6A-1.95, FAC. At present, State University System admissions policies provides for consideration of such applicants on an individual basis and each community college is free to establish its own standards regarding admission of special diploma high school graduates.

7. Postsecondary applicants with Florida special high school diplomas should not be automatically denied admission to postsecondary institutions. Institutions should consider their applications on an individual basis.

All postsecondary institutions are expending financial and personnel resources to improve the retention of students. As enrollments decline it is expected that these efforts will increase. An important ingredient in the process of designing retention programs is the participation of the students themselves. Disabled students should be consulted frequently about means of providing appropriate services.

At present, no information is available showing the retention rate of disabled students in postsecondary education. The Board of Regents' Office of Equal Opportunity is preparing to compile this information on university students in the near future.

Recommendation:

8. As information systems begin to use common definitions, retention rates of disabled students should be included as an identifiable item in retention studies for all students.

For several years advocates for disabled and other students with special needs have pointed out that state mandated placement rates in educational programs could have a negative effect on efforts to recruit such students. The concern is that if institutions are penalized for poor placement rates the result could be less incentive to enroll students who may be difficult to place. At present, the only state mandated placement rates are in the area of vocational education. Section 229.551(3)(g), Florida Statutes, provides that:

> Effective with the 1985-86 school year, any job preparatory vocational program in which the placement rate for persons completing the program is less than 70 percent for three consecutive years shall be ineligible for future state funding. The first three-consecutive-year period shall be the 1984-1985, 1985-1986, and 1986-1987 school years.

The State Board of Education is authorized to adjust placement rates based on such factors as the number of program completers who are minorities or economically disadvantaged. The design of a methodology for this adjustment is currently under review by the Department of Education.

The 1985 Legislature specifically addressed the needs of disabled students through the addition of the following provision to Section 229.551(3)(g), Florida Statutes:

> It is the intent of the Legislature that every effort shall be made to ensure that exceptional students enrolled in job preparatory vocational programs are placed in employment. However, in order to assure that such programs are not penalized for exceptional student participation, exceptional students as defined in s. 228.041 shall be included in the computation of job preparatory program placement rates only when such students may be considered as placements in accordance with the provisions defined in this subsection. Exceptional student

program completers that do not meet the criteria to be considered to be a placement shall not be included in the computation of job preparatory program placement rates.

While this language removes any disincentive for enrolling disabled students, some state and institutional representatives have expressed concern that some program administrators may perceive no incentive for placing such students. While it is too early to tell what the actual effect of this policy will be, it should be stressed that a very real incentive for placement of all students, disabled or otherwise, exists in the 70 percent placement requirement. At the same time there is no negative impact from the initial recruitment of disabled students.

An alternative to the policy in place would be to increase the value of a disabled student in the placement rate calculation. For example, such a student could be counted as two placements. In a program with 10 completers, if the two disabled students were placed, only three other students would have to be employed to meet the 70 percent minimum requirement (7 out of 10). This approach would require a statutory change.

The policy in place represents a positive response to the needs of disabled students. A full year of experience should be obtained before any changes are considered. In addition, information should continue to be maintained on the placement of disabled students.

Recommendation:

9. The successful placement of disabled students in meaningful employment must continue to be sought by all postsecondary institutions. The non-punitive placement policy for disabled vocational students established by the 1985 Legislature should be maintained for at least one year and closely monitored. The fact that program administrators have both the responsibility and incentive to place such individuals should be clearly communicated by officials at the state level.

STATE AND LOCAL COORDINATION

Campus Coordination and Awareness

Provision of campus services for disabled students occurs in a variety of ways in Florida's postsecondary institutions. All community colleges and universities have a designated coordinator for disabled student services. The duties and responsibilities of these coordinators, however, range from administering a formalized office which coordinates services for disabled students to merely being assigned the title, as is the case in one institution where a vice-president is so designated. Postsecondary educators in the State who have interest and expertise in the needs of disabled students are concerned with both the nature of the responsibilities assigned this person and the amount of administrative influence of the position. An additional concern is that in some cases services are provided through several administrative or academic units and no coordination exists among them.

Recommendation:

10. Universities, community colleges, and vocational technical centers should designate a minimum of one employee to provide a single point of contact for coordination of programs and services for disabled students. This individual should have academic preparation and experience in the needs of postsecondary disabled students or be given such training on an inservice basis.

Cooperative agreements have recently been formalized at the state level which identify the services to be provided disabled students by various agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation, the Division of Blind Services and the Department of Education Auxiliary Learning Aids program. Local cooperative efforts also exist which provide for coordination of disabled student support services. Several institutions have provided campus space for counselors from various agencies providing support for disabled students. When such coordination of services exists and sources of assistance are centrally located in this manner, maximum use of resources occurs with reduced duplication of services, and enrollment of disabled students increases.

An additional means of providing interagency cooperation in the local setting is through the use of advisory groups. Representatives from agencies serving disabled students and potential employers can assist the institution in providing appropriate training. When institutional policies reflect this level of commitment, the quality of education will be enhanced and more disabled students will become involved in postsecondary education.

Recommendation:

11. Placement of vocational rehabilitation, blind services, and other counselors on campus should be encouraged by postsecondary institutions as a way to develop closer coordination with these resources.

Recommendation:

12. To assure continued cooperation and coordination in the delivery of services, each institution should consider the establishment of a task force comprised of representatives from the various resources available for disabled students such as Blind Services, Vocational Rehabilitation, Student Financial Aid, TRIO, and Centers for Independent Living.

Regional Coordination and Service Delivery

All students in a particular disability category do not have the same learning needs, and a vital component of successful disabled student participation in postsecondary education is appropriate determination of the learning needs of these individual students. Diagnosis of these needs is a process requiring professionals with academic preparation and experience. While some institutions have the financial and personnel resources to provide this service for some disability areas, most are unable to do so. The Commission received testimony from institutional personnel that some students were referred to other institutions because it would be unfair to encourage them to enroll when no

assistance could be provided. Such a practice may be in violation of federal and state laws, and it could have adverse affects on students wishing to enter postsecondary education.

In order to conduct appropriate diagnosis of disabled students and comply with federal law requiring provision of an appropriate education for all children, the Department of Education has established diagnostic centers throughout Florida. The Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System consists of 18 Associate Centers and 10 Specialized Centers which provide accessibility for every region of the State. One function of the centers is to diagnose the learning needs of disabled students in kindergarten through high school. At present, no resources are available to provide this service to postsecondary disabled students. An additional function of these centers is to provide staff and faculty development in the learning needs of disabled students. This assistance can be provided to both secondary and postsecondary institutions.

The 1985 Legislature authorized the Department of Education to conduct an evaluative study of the Specialized Centers. This study is to be completed by April 30. One of the issues being addressed, at the request of the Commission, is the role of these centers in the provisions of services for postsecondary institutions and students.

The condition of the environment has been shown to be an important factor in determining attitudes toward disabled persons. If the environment facilitates the experience of disabled persons, the disabilities are viewed as manageable. In contrast, when barriers exist, disabilities are viewed as preventing a person from functioning adequately or appropriately. It is possible to affect the attitudes of faculty, administrators and students by changing the institutional environment. Administrators need information and suggestions about programs and services which will benefit disabled students. While the amount of time and resources they have available may be limited, their attitudes can be enhanced through proper information about disabled students. Whenever possible, the employment of qualified personnel with disabilities can serve to heighten awareness among their peers as well as provide a source of role models for disabled students.

It is essential that orientation be provided institutional staff at all levels to increase their understanding of the learning and service needs of postsecondary disabled students. The most crucial environment on the campus, however, is that which involves teaching and learning. Each disability type presents a different learning need and frequently a different response from faculty. Some faculty members feel uncomfortable or unable to deal with a disabled student in the classroom. It has been shown that a faculty member will become more accepting of a disabled student's participation in the classroom if there has been an opportunity to learn how the student will complete readings, tests, laboratories and other learning activities. Having received information about the learning needs of specific disabilities, faculty members are generally willing to work with a disabled student to determine appropriate methods of teaching and learning for that individual. Faculty members must be made aware of campus programs and services provided to assist both them and the student. Information about other faculty members' classroom modifications in the same subject matter is usually very helpful. Again, the FDLRS represents a potential resource both in terms of referrals to qualified training personnel and access to inservice activities sponsored by the Associate and Specialized Centers.

Recommendation:

13. Postsecondary institutions should consider the Florida Diagnostic Learning Resource System as a potential source of information on testing and diagnostic services, curricular modifications, adaptive equipment, and inservice training resource personnel and activities.

The most desirable means of providing services to postsecondary disabled students is through a "mainstreaming" or integrated approach which involves disabled students in every aspect of regular campus life. Specialized programs which cluster disabled students at particular locations are generally considered the least appropriate means of educating them. Additionally, in many cases provision of segregated services is unlawful. It is believed that integration of disabled students provides them with an environment which replicates that of the real world in which they will live and work throughout their lives. Disabled students also contribute to the total campus environment.

Differing opinions exist, however, about the most appropriate setting for postsecondary education of hearing impaired students. Some adhere to the "mainstreaming" approach on the premise that it enables hearing impaired students to interact with the hearing population on a regular basis, thereby teaching them better skills in communicating and taking responsibility for themselves. An alternate opinion suggests that hearing impaired students have additional obstacles to overcome in preparing to participate in a hearing world. It is common for these students to develop low self-esteem as a result of repeated failures in areas where language skills are required. Research has shown that hearing impaired students with loss of hearing before learning to speak and read must function without a language and with no means of learning the culture. To provide these students with the best opportunities for success, proponents of educating them in a self-contained environment believe that they will develop self-esteem and will be able to learn communication skills more readily.

A combination of these approaches is found at St. Petersburg Junior College which houses a Center for the Hearing Impaired. The Center has been in operation for almost twenty years and presently sixty hearing impaired students are enrolled in Associate degree (primarily AS) programs. Rather than separate classes these students are mainstreamed in the standard courses offered at the campus. The majority are pursuing degrees in Accounting, Business, and Computer Science. The Center provides a variety of support services for its students including a four week summer preparation program designed to provide orientation, independent living skills training, and placement testing. Three interpreters are employed by the Center and as Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor has office hours on campus once a week. The Center attracts students from around the state and cannot accept all who apply. According to the director of the Center the graduation and placement rates for the hearing impaired students are equal to or higher than the general campus population.

While mainstreaming is an important goal, the effectiveness of concentrating resources should also be considered when appropriate, particularly if, as in the case of the Center at St. Petersburg, this strategy serves as a support base for the involvement of disabled students in the general instruction and other activities of the institution. The establishment of such centers should be subject to review and approval by the state level governing or coordinating body

responsible for the sector involved. This approach should not be construed as relieving all postsecondary institutions of their responsibility to provide appropriate services for disabled students seeking to enroll.

Recommendation:

14. While mainstreaming is the primary goal for the delivery of educational services to disabled students, the establishment of selected centers of excellence for specific disabilities is supportable. The designation and establishment of such centers should be subject to review and approval by the state level governing or coordinating body responsible for the sector involved. The review should take into account the need for the center, the location of the center, existing resources and additional support required.

Statewide Coordination

Institutional personnel and other advocates of education for disabled students express concern over lack of technical assistance and awareness at the state level. While studies are frequently conducted to determine the effect of state policy on certain groups of students, no such analysis is conducted for disabled students. Existing personnel with EA/EO responsibilities express concern about insufficient time for adequate attention to the necessary activities related to disabled students. In addition to the need for policy assistance at the state level, institutional personnel request assistance in: providing information about existing resources to disabled students; obtaining information about successful program and classroom modifications already in use in other institutions; receiving assistance with staff and faculty development in the learning needs of disabled students; and providing of information on disabled students in the State and the services offered at each postsecondary institution. Consideration should be given to establishment of a position in the Department of Education to respond to these needs. Location of the position should be at a level which would permit interaction with representatives of each of the divisions and educational delivery systems. While actual assignment of the position should be the responsibility of the Commissioner of Education, two offices would be particularly appropriate for placement of such an individual: the Office of Planning, Budgeting and Evaluation (OEPBE) under the Associate Deputy Commissioner and the Equal Employment/ Educational Opportunities Office under the Deputy Commissioner for Administration. The first office is responsible for administration of the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program, and the second has department-wide coordination responsibility for EEO, Section 504, Title IX and related areas. Regardless of placement this individual should be available to assist both of these offices in carrying out their responsibilities as they pertain to disabled students.

Recommendation:

15. A position with responsibility for Postsecondary Disabled Student Programming should be designated or created in the Department of Education. This position should be filled by a person with academic preparation and experience in the policy issues, legal requirements and learning needs of postsecondary disabled students. Responsibilities of this analyst would include determining the effect on disabled students of proposed state policies, providing technical

assistance to institutions in the training of staff and provision of services, and providing support for the administration of the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program.

A key tool for statewide communication is CHOICES, a computerized counseling network of almost 200 computer terminals located throughout the state of Florida. CHOICES can be found in Florida high schools, area vocational-technical centers, community colleges, state universities, private colleges and universities, and prisons and vocational-rehabilitation centers. CHOICES is administered by the Florida Center for Career Development Services.

The system contains information on over 1200 careers that are available in Florida. The system also has data on more than 450 Florida postsecondary institutions. The "user-friendly" computer program interacts with the user's responses to specific questions to aid the client in choosing a career and/or a school. The more than 80,000 people who use CHOICES each year can also get a daily listing of over 11,000 jobs from the "Job Bank" information furnished by the Florida State Job Service.

The system is currently expanding to incorporate a Financial Aid File which will provide clients with an overview of the financial aid process, general information about financial aid, and specific information on particular financial aid awards. While information of interest to disabled students is presently included in the system the full potential of this resource for these students should be explored and publicized both in areas of financial aid and special campus services and opportunities. An example of an institutional initiative which could be listed in CHOICES is the Learning Development and Evaluation Center at Florida Agricultural and Mechanical University which has been established to assist learning disabled students. At present, 17 students are served by the center. Initially conceived in 1982, the center received an appropriation of $100,000 from the 1985 Legislature. The center is designed to provide support for students enrolled in college level courses. Upon entry, each student receives a complete academic and attitudinal assessment which serves as the basis for an individual educational plan to alleviate any deficiencies. In addition to professional assistance the use of peers for tutoring and other support functions is heavily employed. While the center does include a focus on remedial instruction where required, the students served are limited to those who have been diagnosed as learning disabled.

Recommendation:

16. The Florida Center for Career Development Services should expand its CHOICES computerized counseling component to include information which clearly describes financial aid and other resources available to postsecondary disabled students. All CHOICES terminals should be accessible to such students. In addition, the System should collaborate with the Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students and the postsecondary sector boards on the identification of specific institutional and other local programs, services and equipment designed for disabled students. This information should also be maintained in CHOICES.

FUNDING OF SERVICES

Approaches to Funding

The issue of funding is central to every discussion about postsecondary education and disabled students. Three systems are typically considered to be a potential means of providing funds for disabled student services: the reimbursement system, the weighted FTE system, and the categorical advance release system.

In a reimbursement system, institutions are required to make expenditures for disabled students and subsequently to seek reimbursement from the State's approving authority. This system provides accountability and control to the State's administrative office. With such accountability, the Legislature can be assured of proper utilization of funds and support can be sought for increased appropriations. One limiting aspect of a reimbursement system is the difficulty encountered by institutional personnel in finding initial funds to make the expenditures. In some cases, personnel will seek assurance from the State that the expenses will be reimbursed before they provide the necessary services to the disabled students. This procedure delays the provision of services to students, particularly in new programs where there is unfamiliarity about services acceptable for reimbursement.

In a weighted FTE system, funds are provided to the institutions in accordance with a formula specifying dollar amounts for students meeting certain criteria, i.e., existence of a disability. This system requires accurate baseline cost data to generate a valid formula. With weighted FTE, provision of funds can occur in the current cash flow for expenditures. A risk exists, however, that an institution will generate funds based on enrollment of disabled students but will not expend the same amount on services to that disabled population.

The categorical advance release system provides an advance release of funds to the institution for expenditures for students who meet specific criteria, such as disabled students. Funds are released in accordance with a formula generated by demographic data in the local area of the institution, actual student enrollment, or combinations of these and other factors. This system can be responsive and timely in meeting the needs of disabled students. Additionally, funds can only be expended for students in specific categories, thus reducing the risk of institutions allocating the funds to other areas. One risk with the system is the lack of central accountability and uniformity of administration when the program is statewide. It becomes necessary to establish regulations, guidelines and systematic reporting procedures to ensure that expenditures are meeting the legislative intent of the appropriation.

According to a study by the National Clearinghouse on Postsecondary Education of Handicapped Individuals, Florida is the only State in the South and one of the few nationally which has established a statewide program to address the special needs of disabled students. Other States active in this area include California, Maryland, Ohio, and Colorado. One issue addressed during the study was the appropriateness of the current funding approach used in Florida which reimburses institutions for the actual costs of auxiliary learning aides for disabled students.

The major alternative to this procedure is a formula based on enrollment, alone or in combination with other demographic data, which generates a specific dollar amount intended to cover the estimated cost of the services to be provided. California has had experience with the two alternatives to the reimbursement approach in its community colleges and state universities.

In California, community college programs for students with disabilities were originally funded through statutes designed for special education in the public schools. In general, these statutes provided a district with a fixed amount per unit of Average Daily Attendance (ADA) to provide services to students with a particular type of disability. In time, programs were expanded to serve new groups of students and amendments were added to the funding statutes which authorized support at a specified rate for this new group. Eventually, separate programs with separate funding developed for each disability group. This system proved difficult to administer, and it was inequitable and encouraged program managers to seek out and serve certain groups and underserve other groups, depending on the incentives for funding.

In 1976, this weighted FTE formula was replaced with a state grant program to cover the direct excess cost of serving disabled students incurred by the colleges. One major limitation of this program is that the level of funding has been capped while the number of students served has continued to climb.

In contrast, the University of California and state university programs are funded at a fixed per-capita rate which is multiplied by the number of students with disabilities receiving services. This formula has the virtue of being somewhat more responsive to increased need. According to state officials, however, the per-capita rate was developed based on scanty information and bears little relation to the true costs of providing the services.

The current Florida approach directly addresses the needs of individual disabled students. While the State has begun and should continue to maintain detailed information on the types of students served and the cost of the accommodations provided, the day to day management of the program rests in the hands of campus coordinators responsible for determining the most effective use of available resources from all federal, state and local sources. The experience of California is an indication that there is nothing inherently better about a formula approach versus a reimbursement procedure. The fundamental issue in the area of funding services for disabled students appears to be the adequacy of overall support rather than the allocation method. Rather than a major restructuring of the funding process attention should be focused on assuring that the current method is responding to the needs of disabled students in a timely and equitable manner.

Recommendation:

17. The Auxiliary Learning Aids program is designed to respond to the individual needs of disabled students while maintaining the flexibility of institutional coordinators to manage available resources as efficiently as possible. Rather than a major restructuring of this current funding approach, emphasis should be placed on assuring the provision of the necessary aids and accommodations in a timely and equitable manner.

Auxiliary Learning Aids Program

The Auxiliary Learning Aids Program is the only program in Florida receiving general revenue funds specified for disabled postsecondary students. Campus personnel have expressed their dependence on these funds to provide the necessary support services needed by many disabled students.

While the Commission recognizes the importance of this program, it believes that several refinements are in order. The Auxiliary Learning Aids Program has returned unused funds each year, a common procedure in reimbursement programs. Administrative changes have recently occurred, however, which have reduced the amount of unexpended funds and proposed refinements in the allocation process should permit maximum use of these resources by institutions. The Commission believes it important to note that this return of funds is reflective of the reimbursement process rather than lack of need for services by disabled students. It is suggested that increased flexibility should be provided to institutions. Rather than reverting unexpended funds at the close of the fiscal year, institutions should be allowed to carry forward encumbered but unexpended funds for an additional three month period. This would permit institutions to respond to unanticipated conditions such as delays in delivery of equipment.

Another concern expressed throughout the course of the study is the annual expenditure limit of $4500 per student. Most agree that many students do not need services which would exceed the limit. It is reported that hearing impaired students, however, frequently have expenses higher than $4500 due to the high cost of providing interpreters. In addition, the $4500 limit is the same as when originally established in 1979 and no procedure exists for appropriate increases reflective of escalating costs over time. Application of percentage increases in the Consumer Price Index since 1980 would result in a revised ceiling of $6134. It is suggested that any increase in the expenditure cap should be contingent on the appropriation of additional funds to avoid diluting the number of students served. In the first quarter of 1985-86, expenditures for interpreters for the deaf accounted for $53,464 or 38 percent of the $139,935 spent for auxiliary learning aids during this period. Applying this figure to the total appropriation of $978,978 results in an estimated annual expenditure for the deaf of $372,011. Rather than raising the cap completely in one year, a phased approach is suggested. Initially moving to $5,500 would be an increase of approximately 22.2 percent which, when applied to the projected expenditures for interpreters, would require an additional $82,586 (22.2% X $372,011).

Since it is probable that not all deaf students will require support at the new level, an appropriation of $1,061,564 ($978,978 + $82,586) should prevent any erosion of support for students currently being served while providing increased resources for students with particularly significant needs.

Recommendations:

18. The present policy requiring reversion of unexpended auxiliary learning aid funds on June 30 should be revised to permit institutions to carry forward encumbered funds for an additional three months.

19. The $4500 annual cap per student should be raised to accommodate increases in costs of services since the cap was established in 1979.

Specific expenditures should continue to be subject to approval by the Department of Education. To prevent erosion of the number of students served, the appropriation for this program should be increased based on an estimate of the number of students requiring support in excess of the current $4500 cap.

The Commission supports establishment of a 20 percent matching requirement for any Auxiliary Learning Aids funds received as a strategy to encourage greater institutional commitment statewide. Eligible matching funds should be limited to personnel dedicated completely to the provision of services for disabled students. This does not necessarily mean a full-time employee. It is understood that smaller institutions may have limited personnel needs, for example, a single part-time interpreter. In order to be eligible to receive state funds, 20 percent of this individual's compensation should be covered by the institution. In a related area it should be clearly understood that personnel expenses from the Auxiliary Learning Aids appropriation are authorized only for part-time or full-time hourly, salaried, or OPS persons who are necessary for providing direct auxiliary instructional support to disabled students such as readers, notetakers, and interpreters. Personnel expenses for full-time or part-time hourly, salaries, or OPS program coordinators or administrators are the responsibility of the college or university and are not authorized for reimbursement from the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program. While some postsecondary institutions have demonstrated commitment in fulfilling their responsibility to provide access for disabled students, it is evident that some rely exclusively on the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program for support of services for disabled students.

Recommendation:

20. To promote institutional support for the needs of disabled students, institutions requesting reimbursement under the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program should be required to provide matching funds of at least 20 percent. Eligible expenditures should include compensation for personnel who are dedicated completely to the provision of services for disabled students.

Other Sources of Funding

Concern has arisen that in some cases students are provided assistance only so long as state funds are available to support them. While the original intent of the Auxiliary Learning Aids program was to provide financial assistance to postsecondary institutions in meeting the requirements of Section 504, exhaustion of these funds does not relieve the institution of the responsibility for meeting the learning needs of its disabled students. When institutions seek to demonstrate commitment to the needs of disabled students, a variety of funds may be available for assistance. The Postsecondary Cooperation Trust Fund and the Academic Improvement Trust Fund for the community colleges are examples of funds administered by the State. Other sources of assistance may be located through the staffs of the Board of Regents, the State Board of Community Colleges, the Division of Vocational, Adult and Community Education, and the Division of Public School's Bureau of Education for Exceptional Students.

Resources for provision of services to disabled students can be found outside of institutional and state and federal funds. An example of cooperation among an

institution, the community and industry is the Computer Programmer Training for the Disabled at Valencia Community College's open campus. This effort combines training, rehabilitation, and business resources in Central Florida to offer training opportunities in computer programming to severely disabled students. These students acquire skills in a high-demand occupation, while the program assists business and industry by providing a well-trained resource to fill job openings in a rapidly expanding field. Technical support for the program is provided by the IBM Corporation. Several other community colleges have recently implemented similar programs.

Recommendation:

21. Stronger links in serving disabled students should be encouraged between business and postsecondary education and among educational institutions through such resources as the Postsecondary Cooperation Trust Fund, the Community College Academic Improvement Trust Fund, community college staff and program development funds, State University System EA/EO funds, and the Federal Vocational Education funds designated under the Carl D. Perkins Vocational Education Act of 1984 (P.L. 98-524).

V. CONCLUSION

In recent years, policy makers in Florida have become increasingly responsive to the needs of disabled students. Florida is one of only a few states in the nation with a state equity law addressing the educational rights of protected classes. Provisions in Section 228.2001, Florida Statutes, mirror the federal legislation encompassed in Section 504 of the 1973 Vocational Rehabilitation Act which ensures access to postsecondary education for disabled citizens. In addition, Florida is one of a limited number of states which has provided resources for disabled postsecondary students from general revenue funds. In a state that has demonstrated its commitment to disabled students, efforts must continue to maintain ethical and legal responsiveness to their postsecondary educational needs. For this reason, the Florida Legislature requested the Postsecondary Education Planning Commission to submit a Master Plan Supplement outlining current and future needs of the State's postsecondary disabled students.

One of the primary conclusions reached by the Commission as a result of testimony received throughout the study is that disabled postsecondary students in Florida are greatly dependent on the Auxiliary Learning Aids provided for through general revenue support and Rule 6A-10.28, FAC. Students and institutional administrators alike repeatedly expressed their belief that without these funds access for disabled students in Florida's public universities and community colleges would be severely limited. Initiated by the Legislature in 1979, this program is designed to assist public postsecondary institutions in fulfilling their obligations to disabled students as required by Section 504. In subsequent years, institutional administrators and advocates of disabled students have learned a great deal about disabled student needs for services. In addition, the number of disabled students entering postsecondary education is increasing. While funds for the Auxiliary Learning Aids Program were increased during the first several years of the program, they were reduced by $46,000 for 1982-83 and have since remained constant. The cap for annual expenditures for individual students was established in 1979 and has never been increased, yet costs of services have risen.

In developing the Master Plan Supplement, the Commission determined that issues affecting disabled students must be addressed at both institutional and state levels. The local environment in which a student learns must be barrier free to provide access equal to that of non-disabled students. Institutional commitment to the provision of access for disabled students is critical, and the Commission recommends that such commitment be demonstrated prior to an institution receiving state Auxiliary Learning Aids funds. Commitment is most readily identifiable when qualified personnel have been hired to coordinate and provide those services needed by disabled students as delineated in federal and state laws. To provide a barrier free environment it is necessary to ensure that faculty and staff have knowledge of how specific disabilities affect postsecondary students. Attitudinal barriers have been shown to be as prevalent as physical barriers in the environments in which disabled students learn.

An issue to be addressed at the state level is the collection of data on disabled students which would provide policy makers with necessary information for decision making and resource allocation. No comparable information currently exists which accurately reveals the number of disabled students enrolled in postsecondary education in Florida, nor the extent to which their

need for services is being met. Future planning and resource allocations are dependent on the availability of this vital information.

Of serious concern to the Commission is the potential impact of existing state laws, rules and policies on postsecondary disabled students. Use of standardized tests for achievement and placement and rules and policies outlining curricular requirements represent potential barriers for some disabled students. The Commission recommends that an ongoing investigation be conducted in these areas by persons knowledgeable about postsecondary education for disabled students so that policy makers can be provided with accurate information about setting necessary, appropriate standards of achievement for this student population. It is suggested that a position be designated or created in the Department of Education to provide the necessary policy analysis and technical assistance in this area.

The Commission has determined that in some cases statewide centers of excellence can be an efficient means of providing quality postsecondary education for certain disabilities. While these centers can provide specific disabled students throughout the State with maximum opportunity, it is not the Commission's intent to relieve individual institutions of their responsibility to provide appropriate services for disabled students. The Commission suggests that any statewide centers be developed pursuant to policies and procedures developed by the sector board for the sponsoring institution or institutions.

The completion of this Master Plan Supplement by the Commission is an indication of Florida's commitment to the needs of postsecondary disabled students. It is hoped that the principles and policies outlined in this document will assist the State in continuing its leadership role in the provision of quality postsecondary education for all Floridians who wish to pursue such opportunities.

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Tallahassee, Florida
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Affirmative action/equal opportunity employer